EMILY DICKINSON'S POETIC IMAGERY IN 21ST-CENTURY SONGS BY LORI LAITMAN, JAKE HEGGIE, AND DARON HAGEN

by

Shin-Yeong Noh

Submitted to the faculty of the
Jacobs School of Music in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree,
Doctor of Music
Indiana University
May 2019

Accepted by the faculty of the
Indiana University Jacobs School of Music,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Music

Doctoral Committee

_____
Andrew Mead, Research Director

_____
Patricia Stiles, Chair

_____
Gary Arvin

_____
Mary Ann Hart

March 7, 2019

To My Husband, Youngbo, and My Son

Acknowledgements

This work would not have been possible without many people who aided and supported me. I am grateful to all of my committee members for their advice and guidance. I am especially indebted to my research director, Dr. Andrew Mead, who provided me with immeasurable wisdom and encouragement. His inspiration has given me huge confidence in my study. I owe my gratitude to my teacher, committee chair, Prof. Patricia Stiles, who has been very careful and supportive of my voice, career goals, health, and everything. Her instructions on the expressive performance have inspired me to consider the relationship between music and text, and my interest in song interpretation resulted in this study.

I am thankful to the publishers for giving me permission to use the scores. Especially, I must thank Lori Laitman, who offered me her latest versions of the songs with a very neat and clear copy. She is always prompt and nice to me. Also, I appreciate Daron Hagen sharing his opinions with me.

I would like to thank my family. My parents supported me greatly for this long journey at the Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University. Everything has been possible with their cheer. I am also grateful for my dear husband, Youngbo. Youngbo has been the best supporter with his constancy and fidelity. His great care for my physical and emotional health as an expectant mother is enormous. I want to give the biggest blessings and joy to our little boy, who pushed me to complete this study.

Last but not least, my sincerest gratitude goes to God who always allows me wisdom, health, joy, and lots of kind people around me. I am thankful for prayers all my people have offered to me.

Table of Contents

List of Examples

List of Tables

List of Appendices

INTRODUCTION

The "Myth of Amherst," Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), is one of the most notable 19th-century American poets. Well known for her eccentric, reclusive life, Dickinson left nearly 1,800 poems, that deal with various themes such as nature, spirituality, love, life, death, and immortality. Her use of simple words and concise verses implies profound and metaphoric meanings. She also wrote an ample number of letters to her friends and family members. There are about 1,000 existing letter manuscripts which are considered only about a tenth of her letters. Her writings – both poems and letters – have inspired numerous composers in the 20th and 21st centuries with images, philosophical thoughts, and musical characteristics.

The purpose of this paper is to explore Dickinson's poetic imagery in the 21st-century songs by prolific American contemporary composers: Lori Laitman, Jake Heggie, and Daron Hagen. The paper investigates the different compositional styles and techniques in songs by each composer throughout their Emily Dickinson settings: *Two Dickinson Songs* and *In This Short Life* by Lori Laitman, *Newer Every Day* by Jake Heggie, and *Four Dickinson Songs* by Daron Hagen.

When selecting composers and their works for this study, there were several considerations I made. First of all, the composer should be a recognizable contemporary composer in the genre of art songs. Second, the work should be published in the 21st century and as recent as possible, and they should not have a precedent analysis or study. Third, the selected songs have to demonstrate various poetic themes. Many poems in this study include concurrent themes mingled in one poem, especially the theme of infinity or immortality along with love, death, and spirituality.

Chapter 1 deals with Emily Dickinson and her writings. It includes a brief biography: birth, family, schooling, illness, seclusion, and death. It also discusses her writing styles, themes, and major publications. Particularly, the body of the chapter identifies unique experiences and events in her life corresponding to her poetic themes like nature, spirituality, love, and death.

Moreover, it considers Dickinson's musical experiences in life, the musical quality in her poetry, and her influence on American composers in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 explore each composer and the songs. Each chapter consists of the composer's biographical information, song composition, and interpretive analysis of the selected songs. The biography focuses on the composer's musical life as a composer: musical impacts from his or her childhood and youth, music education, career and reputation as a composer, works, recordings, performers, etc. The information is collected through various periodicals and the composer's official website. The "Song Composition" section discusses each composer's attitude on writing songs, important works, favorite poets, the compositional styles in songs, and special connection to Emily Dickinson if there is any. Last but not least, the body of each chapter covers historical information on each group of songs such as composition date, dedication, premiere performance, publication, available recordings, and distinctive characteristics of the text and music. Analysis of each song follows. The key to the study is to find the connection between music and text. The interpretation of the song concentrates on Emily's simple and complex poetic imagery illustrated by musical devices like form, melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, and so forth.

All of these three composers clearly visualize the imagery revealed in Dickinson's poetry. However, the interpretational approach of each composer is distinctive. The "Conclusion" section compares each composer's different compositional techniques and attitudes toward the original text discovered in his or her Dickinson songs studied in this paper. Additionally, the appendices show each composer's complete list of settings to Emily Dickinson.

Throughout the paper, the examples of Emily Dickinson's writing are frequently cited along with J-numbers and F-numbers for poems and L-numbers for letters; for example, I'm Nobody! Who are you?" (J288/ F260). J-numbers represent the chronology estimated by Thomas H. Johnson in his variorum edition of 1955. F-numbers are from the chronology estimated by R. W. Franklin in his variorum edition of 1998. L-numbers are designations assigned by Johnson and Theodora Ward in *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, published in 1958.

The poems and letters cited in this paper are from Johnson's editions: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1955) and *The Letters of Emily Dickinson* (1998). But both J-numbers and F-numbers are indicated in the paper because both numbers are commonly used.

The musical excerpts of Lori Laitman used in this document are the most up-to-date scores that she sent directly to the author through e-mails in January 2019. In these "beautified versions," she corrected some dynamic markings, pedal markings, and misspellings.

Chapter 1: EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886)

Biography

Emily Elizabeth Dickinson was born on December 10, 1830, as the second of three children of Edward and Emily Norcross Dickinson in the family "Homestead" on Main Street in Amherst, Massachusetts. The Dickinson family was significant to the community of Amherst. Her grandfather, Samuel Fowler Dickinson, was one of the founders of Amherst College and served as President of Amherst College from 1845-1854. His eldest son, Edward Dickinson, was an attorney and politician and served as treasurer of Amherst College. Moreover, the railroad came to the town as a result of his great effort.[1] This man of high repute stressed the importance of education for his children.[2]

Dickinson's schooling was "ambitiously classical for a Victorian girl."[3] In 1840, when she was 9, Emily's family moved to a new house on Pleasant Street in Amherst, and the poet started going to the district primary school on Pleasant Street opposite the new house. After a short time at the school, the poet entered Amherst Academy, a place she loved very much. She attended Amherst Academy for seven years from 1840 to 1847, and this school was "an influence of first importance in Emily's formative years."[4] Then, Dickinson attended Mount Holyoke Female Seminary from 1847 to 1848. Both schools had exceptional curricula with numerous science-based subjects, which was to be a great source of her poetry: "Dickinson's poetry has a far larger and richer scientific vocabulary than that of most of her contemporaries."[5] For example,

---

[1] Trustees of Amherst College, "Edward Dickinson, father," The Emily Dickinson Museum, accessed December 12, 2018, https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/edward_dickinson.

[2] Richard B. Sewall, *The Life of Emily Dickinson* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974), 2:335.

[3] Judith Farr and Louise Carter, *The Gardens of Emily Dickinson* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 1.

[4] Sewall, 2:337.

[5] Trustees of Amherst College, "Emily Dickinson's Schooling: Amherst Academy," https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/node/135.

"Her poems show a knowledge of chemical process, of botanic and especially geologic lore far beyond the usual nature poet's stock in trade. There are more earthquakes and volcanoes in her poems."[6]

In 1855, the Dickinson family moved back to the Homestead, the poet's birthplace, which had been sold in 1833 due to her grandfather's financial trouble after excessive contributions to Amherst College. Edward Dickinson repurchased and renovated the Homestead, which provided Emily with a greenhouse for gardening and her own bedroom, a space for her writing.[7] In 1856, her older brother, Austin married Emily's close friend, Susan Gilbert. They lived in the house, nicknamed "The Evergreens," next to the Homestead. In their early marriage, the poet participated in social activities. However, around 1860, when she was thirty years old, Dickinson began to withdraw from social gatherings such as church and the yearly commencement exercises for Amherst College held in her home.[8] At this time, her output of poetry was very prolific especially in 1862-65.

Dickinson left the Homestead and lived with her cousins, Frances and Louisa Norcross in Cambridgeport, Massachusetts, for eight months in 1864 and six months in 1865 to have treatments for her eye illness. After her last trip in 1865, the poet increasingly became more reclusive in the family Homestead until her death.[9] She rarely came out of her room, garden, and house:

> Many tales have been told about this brilliant female poet's estrangement from the world…We know that Dickinson would send trays of food down outside her window to her nephew and other children but would never leave her room to speak with them. When her brother's love, Mabel Todd Lewis, would play the piano in Emily Dickinson's living room, Dickinson would have a maid deliver a flower, a cake of rice, or a glass of wine to Ms. Lewis to thank her for her performance. We know that she would never greet Ms. Lewis or thank her in person.[10]

---

[6] Sewall, 2:345.

[7] Trustees of Amherst College, "Emily Dickinson: The Writing Years," https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/writing_years.

[8] Susan Kavaler-Adler, "Emily Dickinson and the Subject of Seclusion," *American Journal of Psychoanalysis, 51*, no. 1 (March 1991): 21.

[9] Trustees of Amherst College, "Emily Dickinson: The Writing Years."

[10] Kavaler-Adler, 22.

Dickinson's later life is occupied with illness and the loss of family and close friends including her parents and nephew.[11] Franklin remarks, "Although ill in the 1880s, the art of poetry having become an essential part of her personal expression and communication."[12] After two and a half years of illness, Emily Dickinson died on May 15, 1886, at age 55.

Dickinson's Writing

"Emily Dickinson wrote poems nearly all her life," R. W. Franklin states.[13] "She may already have been at work in 1845 when, still fourteen years old, she confided to a friend that "poetical" was "what young ladies aim to be now a days."[14] In her early twenties, she indicated in the letter to her brother, "I've been in the habit myself of writing some few things" (L110).[15] Emily Dickinson composed nearly 1,800 poems. Her writing was exceptionally productive in her late 20s and early 30s. Emily Dickinson wrote almost 1,100 poems by 1865, her age 35, and about 850 of these poems were written in 1862-65. The poet started binding her own poems systematically in mid-1858. She copied over 800 of her poems into forty "fascicles" – small handmade booklets – from mid-1858 to early 1864. At the end of 1865, she had nearly 1,100 bound or unbound sheets of manuscripts.[16] The poet discontinued the printing and binding system from 1865 when she returned from Cambridge where she lastly traveled for eye treatment. Most of the manuscripts after 1865 survive on scraps of paper, for instance, envelopes, flyers, and wrapping paper.[17] These manuscripts demonstrate Dickinson's original writing process.[18] Dickinson shared manuscripts of her poem with her family and friends. Susan Dickinson received

[11] Trustees of Amherst College, "Emily Dickinson: The Later Years," https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/later_years.

[12] Emily Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Ralph W. Franklin (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 1.

[13] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Franklin, 1.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Emily Dickinson, *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson and Theodora Ward (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1958), 234.

[16] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Franklin, 2-3.

[17] Ibid., 3.

[18] Trustees of Amherst College, "Emily Dickinson: The Later Years."

about 250 poems and Thomas Higginson about a hundred. Seventy-one went to Norcross cousins and numerous numbers to her longtime friends including Samuel and Mary Bowles and Elizabeth and Josiah Gilbert Holland.[19] However, the vast amount of her manuscripts remained lost.

Most of her almost 1,800 poems came out into the world posthumously. Only about ten poems were published anonymously in the newspaper during her lifetime, perhaps without her permission.[20] It is not revealed whether Dickinson wanted to publish her poetry or not.[21] However, her writings state her negative attitude about being public: "Publication – is the Auction / Of the Mind of Man –" (from J709/ F788) and "I'm Nobody! Who are you? / Are you – Nobody – too? … Don't tell! They'd advertise – you know! / How dreary – to be – Somebody!" (from J288/ F260). After her death, Emily's manuscripts were discovered in her drawer by her sister, Lavinia Dickinson. Throughout a century, her poems have been published by several editors including Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Mabel Loomis Todd, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, Thomas H. Johnson, R. W. Franklin, Marta Werner, and Cristanne Miller. The editions by Higginson and Todd include selected poems with many revisions of words and punctuations. Johnson, on the other hand, first collected her complete works in *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* in 1955. His goal was to present Dickinson's poems and proses as they were written. Also, he indicates the chronological order of the poems.[22] Franklin collected facsimiles of Dickinson's manuscripts, *The Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson*, in 1981, but the lineation in this edition does not mirror the four-line hymn form in her poetry, which will be discussed in "Dickinson's Musicality" section. Thus, Johnson's edition has remained as a preferred scholarly edition along with Franklin's facsimile edition as a supplement.[23] The most recent edition, *Emily Dickinson's Poems: As She Preserved Them* by Cristanne Miller, was published in 2016. "This is the first

[19] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Franklin, 3.
[20] Trustees of Amherst College, "Emily Dickinson: The Publication Questions," https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/publication_question.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Gudrun Grabher, Roland Hagenbüchle, and Cristanne Miller, *The Emily Dickinson Handbook* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 122.
[23] Jane Donahue Eberwein, "Dickinson, Emily," in *American National Biography*, accessed December 12, 2018, http://www.anb.org.

edition of Dickinson's poems to present her fascicle and unbound-sheet poems in the order in which she copied them, in easily readable form."[24]

Dickinson's poems are lyrical and thoughtful with various tones: humorous and serious, joyful and miserable, bright and dark, submissive and rebellious, etc. The poems are often short with a single speaker, in the first person, "I," which is not necessarily the poet herself.[25] She delivers intense and complex meanings through simple, concise words. According to Carol Kimball, by combining with other words, the poet transforms and twists the poetic meaning and image; therefore, Dickinson's poetry requires the reader to be sensitive to follow the poet's thought process.[26]

Dickinson's favorite themes, nature, time, religion, love, life, death, and immortality are often blended in one poem; for instance, a poem about spirituality through observation of nature; a poem describing the passage of time to imply aging of life; a poem about love that could be fulfilled in the eternal afterlife. These themes are closely related to her personal experiences from gardening, religious activity, love life, or loss of friends.

Gardening was an important part of Emily's life, and her poems and letters show abundant and knowledgeable observations of nature. During her lifetime, she was more famous as a gardener rather than as a poet.[27] Since the age of 12, Emily Dickinson had helped her mother who loved flowers and cultivated beautiful gardens.[28] At Amherst Academy and Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, she enjoyed botany courses, and she made an herbarium, a collection of pressed plants, which includes more than 400 specimens with Latin name of each item.[29] The newly built conservatory in the remodeled Homestead, that Edward Dickinson presented for Emily, became a significant space to her, especially when she lived in seclusion. The

---

[24] Emily Dickinson, *Emily Dickinson's Poems: As She Preserved Them*, ed. Cristanne Miller (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 1.

[25] Trustees of Amherst College, "Major Characteristics of Dickinson's Poetry," https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/poetry_characteristics.

[26] Carol Kimball, "Setting Emily," *Journal of Singing, 68*, no. 4 (April/May 2012): 462.

[27] Farr and Carter, 3.

[28] Farr and Carter, 4; Sewall, 1:86.

[29] Sewall, 2:345.

conservatory was full of a variety of plants including rare tropical flowers and ferns.[30] Also, Dickinson was sensitive to the weather, changing seasons, and transitions in times of the day.[31] She was pleased with the changing seasons and their respective qualities and characteristics.[32] Moreover, the creatures dwelling along with her plants, for example, bees, insects, and birds, frequently appear in her poetry. Her experience as a gardener generated vivid poetic images of time and living things.

> The Lilacs – bending many a year –
> Will sway with purple load –
> The Bees – will not despise the tune –
> Their Forefathers – have hummed –
>
> (from "It will be Summer – eventually" J342/ F374)[33]

Emily Dickinson's hometown, Amherst, a part of New England, had strong religious disciplines.[34] She attended the singing school and services at the First Congregational Church in Amherst.[35] Moreover, the schools she attended, Amherst Academy and Mount Holyoke, emphasized theology.[36] Although Mount Holyoke encouraged students to confess their belief in Christ, Dickinson indicated she had no hope to profess her faith.[37] After her formal education, the religious revival of 1850 pervaded her town, church, and family, and the public profession of faith in Christ was required to be a member of the church. Unlike her family members, Emily Dickinson refused to join the church.[38] However, her absence from the church did not mean that she was an atheist. Many of Dickinson's poems reveal her spiritual aspects and questionings.

---

[30] Farr and Carter, 156-158.

[31] Trustees of Amherst College, "Emily Dickinson and Gardening," https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/gardening.

[32] Sewall, 2:344.

[33] Emily Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Including Variant Readings Critically Compared with All Known Manuscripts*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1955), 273.

[34] Carlton Lowenberg, *Musicians Wrestle Everywhere: Emily Dickinson & Music* (Berkeley, CA: Fallen Leaf Press, 1992), xviii.

[35] George Boziwick, Katherine Preston, and Mark Katz, ""My Business is to Sing": Emily Dickinson's Musical Borrowings," *Journal of the Society for American Music, 8*, no. 2 (May 2014): 131.

[36] Roger Lundin, *Emily Dickinson and the Art of Belief,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 36.

[37] Ibid., 40-41.

[38] Ibid., 51.

Who has not found the Heaven – below –
Will fail of it above –
For Angels rent the House next ours,
Wherever we remove –

(J1544/ F1609)[39]

Emily Dickinson's ample amount of love poems induces curiosity about her love life. Her language with powerful words and metaphors deliver ardent, intense, or sensual feelings which could be derived from her romantic experiences.

Come slowly – Eden!
Lips unused to Thee –
Bashful – sip thy Jessamines –
As the fainting Bee –

Reaching late his flower,
Round her chamber hums –
Counts his nectars –
Enters – and is lost in Balms.

(J211/ F205)[40]

Dickinson never married, but she had several romantic relationships. During her schooling and young adulthood, she had significant male friends; Benjamin Newton gave her a beloved copy of Emerson's poems; the poet shared some of her early poetry with Henry Vaughn Emmons; George Gould, her brother's classmate at Amherst College, proposed to her.[41] A series of three love letters to a "Master," written between 1858 and 1861, show the poet's fervent affection. The letters include "revelation of the intensity, depth, and power of her love and the agony of its frustration" as well as her powerful language with "the height of the metaphoric style."[42] In her later life, Dickinson had a romantic relationship with Judge Otis Phillips Lord, a close friend of her father. There are fifteen manuscripts of drafts or fragments of their letters. Some of them indicate their consideration to marry.[43]

---

[39] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 1065.
[40] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 148.
[41] Trustees of Amherst College, "Emily Dickinson: Her Childhood and Youth," https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/childhood_youth.
[42] Sewall, 2:512-513.
[43] Trustees of Amherst College, "Emily Dickinson's Love Life," https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/love_life.

In her childhood and youth, the letters Dickinson wrote to her friends show her intimate and lively friendships. However, the loss of her friends and relatives in her youth gave her fear of losing people: "I look at my father and mother and Vinnie, and all my friends, and I say – no, can't leave them, what if they die when I'm gone" (L86).[44] During her later life in the 1870s and 80s, she suffered from the loss of her parents, nephew (Gib), lovers (Charles Wadsworth and Otis P. Lord), and close friend (Helen Hunt Jackson). Especially, from Gib's death at age eight, she became ill for two and a half years until her death.[45] Her poetry demonstrates the poet's deep thoughts on life, death, and immortality.

> Because I could not stop for Death –
> He kindly stopped for me –
> The Carriage held but just Ourselves –
> And Immortality.
>
> (from J712/ F479)[46]

Dickinson's Musicality and Influence on American Composers

There is much evidence proving Emily Dickinson's musical activities such as playing the piano, singing, collecting sheet music, and attending concerts. Her musical experiences in childhood, in school, and in the church became valuable assets for her imagery. George Boziwick, who explores Emily Dickinson's music book, remarks that "Through her engagement with music, Dickinson was able to fashion an identity served by musical longings, one that would ultimately serve a vital role in the formation of her unique poetic voice."[47] The musicality in her poetry draws many composers to write songs with her texts.

"My business is to sing" (L269).[48] Dickinson considered herself as a singer as shown in her verses, "I shall keep singing!" (J250/ F270), "Why – do they shut Me out of Heaven? / Did I

[44] Dickinson, *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, 197.
[45] Trustees of Amherst College, "Emily Dickinson: The Later Years."
[46] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 546.
[47] Boziwick, Preston, and Katz, 131.
[48] Dickinson, *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, 413.

sing – too loud?" (J248/ F268), and "I sing to use the waiting," (J850/ F955).[49] Also, Dickinson often describes poems as "hymns."[50] Dickinson played with setting new words to the old hymn-tunes while sitting in church, and she sang hymns in singing school.[51] These musical activities naturally influenced the majority of her poems. Carolyn Cooley explored the hymn form of Dickinson's poetry: most of her poems consist of four-line stanzas, and the metric schemes correspond to protestant church hymns.[52] Even though she kept this single limited hymn form, Dickinson varied the hymn meters, suitable for her diverse poetic expressions:

> …by the time she began to use the various meter, she demonstrated her ability to create an innovative style of her own…she perceived how to gain new effects by exploring the possibilities within traditional metric patterns and by eventually merging in one poem the various meters themselves. By this process, "the forms which intrinsically carry their own retardment or acceleration, could be made to supply the continuum for the mood and ideas of the language."[53]

Dickinson uses dashes and capitalization to emphasize the words. Dashes embody a musical rhythm, "a visual representation of a musical beat."[54] David Porter states "The dash is intended to denote an expressive suspension. In order to have good expression, a distinct and judicious observation of the pauses is absolutely necessary."[55] Sewall says, "the dash became a sensitive instrument to regulate rhythm and gain emphasis" in her writing.[56] He also suggests this unique writing attribute may come from the composition book used in her schooling; "the proper use of the dash is to express a sudden stop, or change of the subject" and "any words, when remarkably emphatical, or when they are the principal subject of the composition, may begin with capitals."[57] Capitalizations and dashes also enhance individuality and self-sufficiency of

---

[49] Judy Jo Small, "A Musical Aesthetic," in *Emily Dickinson: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Judith Farr (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996), 207.

[50] Carolyn Lindley Cooley, *The Music of Emily Dickinson's Poems and Letters: A Study of Imagery and Form* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003), 80.

[51] Cooley, 22; Boziwick, Preston, and Katz, 131.

[52] Cooley, 70-119.

[53] Ibid., 72.

[54] Thomas H. Johnson, *Emily Dickinson: An Interpretive Biography* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960), 94.

[55] David T. Porter, *The Art of Emily Dickinson's Early Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 143.

[56] Sewall, 2:350.

[57] Ibid., 2:349-350.

metaphors and images, which bring theatrical characters and sets.[58] In many song settings of Emily Dickinson, the pause between words created by dashes and capitalizations are frequently reflected in the rhythmic space in music.

Dickinson's choice of words generates rich musical sounds. They reveal her interests and experiences in music. Her writings involve abundant musical terms – music, song, opera, melody, harmony, bell, bugle, lute, drum, trumpet, etc. The use of verbs like 'sing,' 'murmur,' and 'jingle' also creates a specific sound. Moreover, Dickinson's poetry contains a number of aural images from nature – bee, cricket, fly, frog, wind, river, and so on. Especially, she uses many examples of singing birds – a wren, a phoebe, a bobolink, or a robin – as a metaphor for artistic expression and as a symbol of the poet herself.[59] These aural images inherent in her poems provide plentiful compositional ideas like word painting and musical onomatopoeia.

"A sizable amount of American vocal music would not exist but for her poetry."[60] With her musicality, appealing themes, and powerful images discovered in her poetry, Emily Dickinson has been one of the most beloved poets to American composers throughout the span of a century. In 1992, Carlton Lowenberg counted 1,615 musical settings by 276 composers in his research, *Musicians Wrestle Everywhere*, and mezzo-soprano Virginia Dupuy has discovered more than 3,000 songs with Dickinson's texts.[61] The first vocal setting of Emily Dickinson was Etta Parker's "Have You Got a Brook in Your Little Heart?" in 1896.[62] In the twentieth century, Arthur Farwell and Ernst Bacon explored Emily Dickinson's poetry to great depth.[63] Other major composers are Elliott Carter, Ned Rorem, Aaron Copland, Roy Harris, Vincent Persichetti, John Adams, Gordon Getty, and Gloria Coates. Contemporary composers, who set Dickinson in 1990s and in the 21st century, include Robert Baksa, Lee Hoiby, Richard Hundley, Osvaldo Golijov, Ricky Ian Gordon, Lori Laitman, Libby Larsen, Daron Hagen, Jake Heggie, André Previn, and

[58] Kimball, "Setting Emily," 462.
[59] Small, 207.
[60] Lowenberg, xvii.
[61] Kimball, "Setting Emily," 461.
[62] Lowenberg, xxvi.
[63] Kimball, "Setting Emily," 462.

Richard Pearson Thomas, among others. The most popular poems to set are “I’m Nobody! Who are you?” “Wild Nights!” and “I Taste a Liquor Never Brewed.”[64] Beside art songs, Dickinson’s verses and images have been also delivered by choral music, operas, ballet, and instrumental music.[65]

[64] Lowenberg, xxvi.
[65] Ibid.

Chapter 2: LORI LAITMAN (B. 1955)

Biography

Lori Laitman is one of the most prolific living composers today with over 250 songs, several operas, and choral works, which have been widely performed in renowned places across the United States and the world.[1] "Critics are enthusiastic in their praise of Laitman's songs, citing her taste for fine texts, and the nuance and color of her musical settings."[2] Gregory Berg in the Journal of Singing states "It is difficult to think of another composer before the public today who equals-let alone exceeds-Laitman's love for and understanding of the human voice, or her profound sensitivity to both poetic and prose text. She continues to be an astounding gift to singers everywhere."[3]

Laitman was born on January 12, 1955, in Long Beach, New York in a musical family. Her mother and two sisters were musicians, and music always filled her house. She started learning piano and flute at age 5 and 7, and she focused on flute more profoundly. After graduating from high school at age 16, she attended Yale College where she got along with many musicians and composers. In the summer following her sophomore year, she attended Interlochen Music Camp in Michigan to study flute. There soprano Lauren Wagner was her roommate, became her close friend, and inspired her to compose songs. During the summer, Laitman also studied composition and wrote an avant-garde song for Wagner. While at Yale, she continued studying composition and writing music, mostly instrumental music.[4] Laitman graduated *magna*

[1] Lori Laitman, "Biography," Lori Laitman, Composer, accessed November 18, 2018, http://artsongs.com/biography.

[2] Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature,* rev. ed. (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2006), 339.

[3] Gregory Berg, "Lori Laitman: The Scarlet Letter," *Journal of Singing, 74.* no. 5 (May/June 2018): 596.

[4] Laitman, "Informal Biography," Lori Laitman, Composer, http://artsongs.com/informal-biography.

cum laude from Yale College and earned Master of Music in flute performance from the Yale School of Music.[5]

In her early career, Laitman wrote music for industrial films and theater; however, in 1991, she began to focus on song composition.[6] Her old friend, Lauren Wagner asked Laitman to write some songs for her debut CD as a winner of the Concert Artists Guild competition. Laitman was not confident in writing a song at first, but she set *The Metropolitan Tower* by Sara Teasdale successfully. The song cycle was premiered by Wagner at Merkin Hall in New York, and Richard Hundley highly praised her for her terrific songs.[7] Laitman calls herself an "accidental art song composer" and declares "that was the beginning, I found my voice in writing for voice."[8]

Since this time, her output of vocal works has been in full flourish. She has written over 250 songs, and many of them have been released on Naxos Records, Albany Records, and others. Besides art songs, she has also explored the genre of opera. When she visited the University of Central Arkansas for the Songs Across the Americas Festival in 2006, Robert Holden, a baritone and a co-director of the opera theater of the university, performed her music. He asked her to write an opera for the university, and she wrote her first opera, *The Scarlet Letter* with a libretto by David Mason in 2008.[9] The opera was revised in 2015-16 and professionally premiered by Opera Colorado in 2016.[10] Mason and Laitman also closely worked together on their second opera, *Ludlow*, and a Holocaust oratorio, *Vedem*.[11] Her interest in writing operas continued in *The Three Feathers*, a children's opera with a libretto by Dana Gioia, which Seattle Opera took on tour in 2018. Laitman is currently working on another opera, *Uncovered*, with librettist Leah Lax.[12]

---

[5] Laitman, "Biography."

[6] Carol Lines, "The Songs of Lori Laitman," *Journal of Singing* 64, no. 1 (September/October 2007): 31.

[7] Laitman, "Informal Biography."

[8] Ibid.

[9] Susan Dormady Eisenberg, "From Art Song to Opera," *Classical Singer*, October 1, 2009, accessed November 14, 2018, https://www.csmusic.net/content/articles/from-art-song-to-opera.

[10] Laitman, "The Scarlet Letter," http://artsongs.com/scarlet-letter.

[11] Laitman, "Biography."

[12] Ibid.

Her reputation has grown through a number of awards from many prominent institutes and organizations. She recently received Ian Mininberg Alumni Award for Distinguished Service from The Yale School of Music in 2018.[13] In addition, a scene from her unfinished opera, *Uncovered*, was named as a finalist of the 2018 Domenic J. Pellicciotti Opera Composition Prize.[14] Her previous awards include the Boston Art Song Competition in 2000, the Best American Art Song Competition in 2004, and the Maryland State Arts Council's Individual Artist Award in Music Composition several times.[15] Laitman has been an active music educator and mentor for composers and performers. She has been invited to give a number of master classes as a visiting artist or artist-in-residence at many universities and conservatories in the United States.[16]

Laitman's Song Composition

The vast array of Laitman's vocal works demonstrates the diversity in her song composition. First, she has set the words of more than 75 poets including herself. The poets range from deceased to contemporary, female and male, and American and non-American.[17] Her interest in writing on the Holocaust inspired her set the words by victims of the Holocaust such as a Romanian poet, Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger, a Yiddish poet, Abraham Sutzkever, and children killed in the Holocaust. Secondly, Laitman has written for literally all voice types. Many songs can be sung by any voice type. Also, she is always open to performers transposing her songs so as to fit many singers.[18] Thirdly, most of her art songs are for voice and piano, but in some songs,

[13] Ibid.
[14] SUNY Potsdam, "The 2018 Domenic J. Pellicciotti Opera Composition Prize," The State University of New York at Potsdam, accessed December 2, 2018, http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/Crane/events/pellicciotti.
[15] Paul André Bempéchat, "Laitman, Lori," *Grove Music* Online, ed. Deane Root, accessed November 28, 2018, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.
[16] Laitman, "Residencies," http://artsongs.com/residencies/
[17] Lines, 32.
[18] Laitman, "FAQ," http://artsongs.com/faq.

she uses other instruments: flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, alto saxophone, trumpet, violin, cello, and double bass. Lastly, the level of difficulty of the songs extends from undergraduate to professional level.[19]

The intimate communication between music and poetry is the jewel in the crown of Laitman's song composition. Gregory Berg comments "Laitman has her own distinctive voice as a composer, but what makes it such a seductive voice is its limitless range of inflections, which stems from the even more limitless possibilities to be found in the world of words and ideas to which she is so devoted."[20] Laitman also remarks "The words always come first, and I'm careful to set them properly for the singer. My foremost goal is to illuminate the meaning of the text."[21] Therefore, the choice of poetry is an essential part of her song composition. For her, feeling an emotional connection to the poem is the most important consideration as she describes in detail:

> …there are certain factors I consider when choosing a text. It's easier when a poem isn't too long or too short…It's good if the poem is not too complex, because the audience has to be able to grasp of the meaning of the poem through the song. I have found that poems that tell a story work very well — as it is easy for the audience to follow along…I try to avoid poems with a lot of homonyms or complex words (potentially difficult to understand aurally). Most importantly, it is good if the poem has some emotional "breathing space" — so that the music can take over what is left unsaid.[22]

Laitman sets contrasting poems to create a dramatic sequence within a cycle. She usually begins with composing the first song and then determines which sequence would fit.[23] When setting text to music, Laitman carefully puts emphasis on important words in each line, and simultaneously, tries to set the words vocally friendly to singers so they can deliver the words effectively to the audience.[24] The composer always begins with the vocal melody. She

---

[19] Lines, 32.
[20] Berg, Gregory, "Within These Spaces: Songs of Lori Laitman," *Journal of Singing, 66,* no. 3 (January/February 2010): 370.
[21] Eisenberg.
[22] Laitman, "FAQ."
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.

composes the vocal phrase with some basic idea of the harmonies, but she waits to give concrete shape to the accompaniment until the vocal part is finished.[25]

The compositional techniques in Laitman's songs – through-composed structure, word painting, shifts of tonal center, meter changes, etc. – are all about expression of the text. Carol Lines points out:

> Rhythm and meter are devotedly derived from nuance of prosody, continuously changing…The songs are inspired and creative in their flexibility, with delightful new ideas emerging constantly. Her Neo-Romantic melodic writing consistently takes surprising and unpredictable directions, never abrupt, but smooth, pleasing, and natural. Tessitura and range are thoughtfully considered. Tempos are flexible, with fluctuation indicated specifically throughout each song, including suggested mood and color changes, always reflecting the varying thought and/or emotions of the poem.[26]

The music freely travels through different tonal regions according to the images of the words. As a result, the vocal line sometimes moves unexpectedly, and it is hard to define a specific tonality. Due to frequent tonal shifts, it is impractical to have key signatures in her music.[27] Also, her delicate accompaniment enhances the image and mood of the text with a postmodern harmonic language. Laitman says that "I typically craft the accompaniment to color the emotions behind the words, and all musical aspects (rhythm, textures, etc.) are chosen to add additional layers of interpretation to the poem itself. Each song thus becomes my musical interpretation of the poem."[28] Laitman indicates her interpretation in the score with very specific markings of tempo, mood, dynamics, and pedal. All of these compositional styles and efforts are for expressive performance. She says "the markings are only guidelines. I hope each performer will find the best way to make the music leap off the page."[29]

---

[25] Ibid.
[26] Lines, 32.
[27] Laitman, "FAQ."
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

Emily Dickinson has been one of Laitman's most favorite female poets along with Sara Teasdale, and Mary Oliver.[30] Laitman states about Dickinson's poetry:

> Dickinson's poetry has always appealed to me for the beauty of her language and her striking vision, which I find so unique…I find many of her poems to be too complex to be perfect for song…I try to find poems that I think I understand so that I might "translate" them into music. Each song is my interpretation – and I hope that my musical gestures communicate my feelings both to the performers and to the audience.[31]

Since she set three Dickinson poems in *Days and Nights* (1995), Laitman has composed almost 30 Dickinson songs. Carol Lines comments that Laitman's Dickinson settings contrast with settings of other poets like Teasdale songs in terms of vocal line, rhythm, and text repetition.[32] But to the question, whether it was her intention, Laitman answers "No, it was not a conscious decision. I always try to do my best to make a coherent interpretation of the poem. If there is a difference between my Dickinson songs and my settings of other poets, it is just because I interpret each poetic voice differently, but again, these differences are intuitive."[33] This study explores Laitman's *Two Dickinson Songs* (2002) and *In This Short Life* (2011) in detail.

Two Dickinson Songs (2002)

Two Dickinson Songs, for soprano and piano[34]

1. Good Morning Midnight
2. Wider than the Sky

> Two Dickinson Songs by Lori Laitman
> Copyright © 2004 by Lori Laitman. Enchanted Knickers Music, BMI. Used by permission.

Laitman wrote this pair of songs on April 12-23, 2002 and revised it on July 23, 2003. The score was published in 2004 by Enchanted Knickers Music, BMI. As many of Laitman's

---

[30] Kimball, *Song*, 340.

[31] Mary E. Crawford, "Dickinson Sings: A Study of a Selection of Lori Laitman's Settings for High Voice" (D.M.A. diss., University of Cincinnati, 2013), 74, accessed December 1, 2018, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

[32] Lines, 35.

[33] Crawford, 77-78.

[34] Lori Laitman, *Two Dickinson Songs: For Soprano and Piano* (United States: Enchanted Knickers Music, 2004).

songs have been dedicated to her family and friends, she dedicated "Good Morning Midnight" to her father, Milton Laitman, for his 86th birthday and "Wider than the Sky" to her mother-in-law, Eleanor Rosenblum, for her 76th birthday. Both songs were also dedicated to her friend, pianist Warren Jones, who recorded this work.

Laitman prefers to have contrasting poems for her cycles, so she consciously selects poems that provide "good dramatic flow and contrast."[35] In this pair of songs, there are textual and musical contrasts between the two songs. "Good Morning – Midnight" is narrative and the musical structure is through-composed while the music of "Wider Than The Sky" is structural in AAB along with the meaning of the text. The mood is completely different between the two songs; one with the charming mood through short and bouncy vocal phrases and the second with the calm and broad feeling. Laitman gives performers permission to choose the order of these songs as they desire.[36]

This pair of songs is included on the recording titled, *So Much Beauty*, performed by Janeanne Houston, soprano and Robert Jorgensen, piano, and released on February 9, 2004, by Elmgrove Productions. Another recording titled, *Within These Spaces*, also includes the pair performed by Jennifer Check, soprano and Warren Jones, piano, released on May 1, 2009 by Albany Records.

"Wider Than the Sky" was performed at Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's 80th birthday party by Ruth's daughter-in-law, soprano Patrice Michaels, and the song is included on the new CD, *Notorious RBG in Songs*, performed by Patrice Michaels, soprano and Kuang-Hao Huang, piano, and released on June 8, 2018. For that CD, Laitman transposed the song up a major second for the singer. Moreover, the singer requested Laitman to write "a mini-orchestration of the song" for an upcoming live tour of the CD in several US cities in 2019. The composer scored the song

[35] Crawford, 74-75.
[36] Laitman, *Two Dickinson Songs*.

for soprano, clarinet, cello, and piano, and inserted a few measures in several places of the song to balance the song as a single entity, rather than as part of a group.[37]

1. Good Morning Midnight

Good Morning – Midnight –
I'm coming Home –
Day – got tired of Me –
How could I – of Him?

Sunshine was a sweet place –
I liked to stay –
But Morn – didn't want me – now –
So – Goodnight – Day!

I can look – can't I –
When the East is Red?
The Hills – have a way – then –
That puts the Heart – abroad –

You – are not so fair – Midnight –
I chose – Day –
But – please take a little Girl –
He turned away!

(J425/ F382)[38]

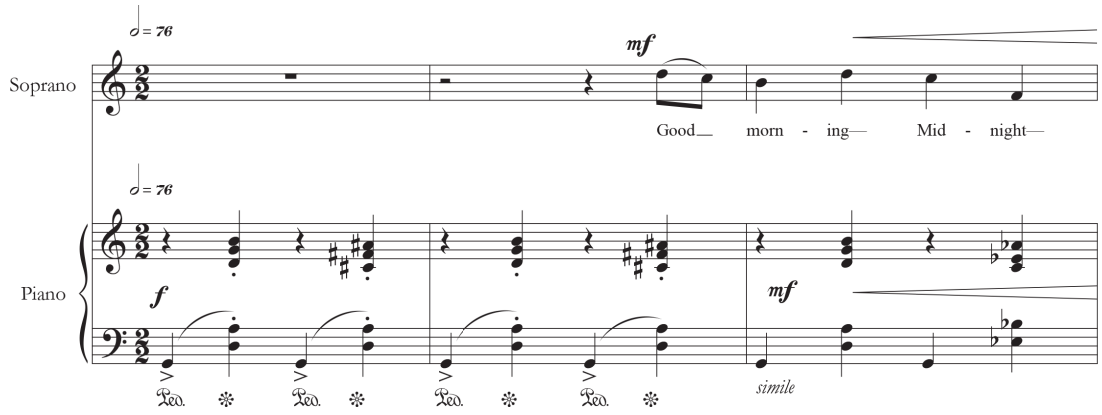
This poem expresses the speaker's emotions along with the passage of time: midnight-morning-day. The speaker, "a little girl," adores the daytime and sunshine. But when she realizes the day got tired of her, she replies "Goodnight – Day!" At the end of the poem, the girl pitifully pleads with "Midnight" to accept her even though she longs for "Day."

Dickinson's unique writing provides a sense of humor. The opening verse, "Good Morning – Midnight" which means 'hello – midnight,' shows Dickinson's ironic greeting together with "Goodnight – Day!" instead of 'Good bye – Day!' It attracts readers with the coexistence of 'morning and night' or 'night and day' in one greeting. In addition, the poet gives the times their own personality. The speaker greets to midnight and day; and she calls midnight "You," and day she calls "He" in the last stanza. Also, times take active verbs in sentences such

[37] Lori Laitman, e-mail message to author, January 1, 2019.
[38] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 329.

as “Day got tired of me,” “Morn didn’t want me now,” “please take a little girl,” and “He (Day) turned away!”

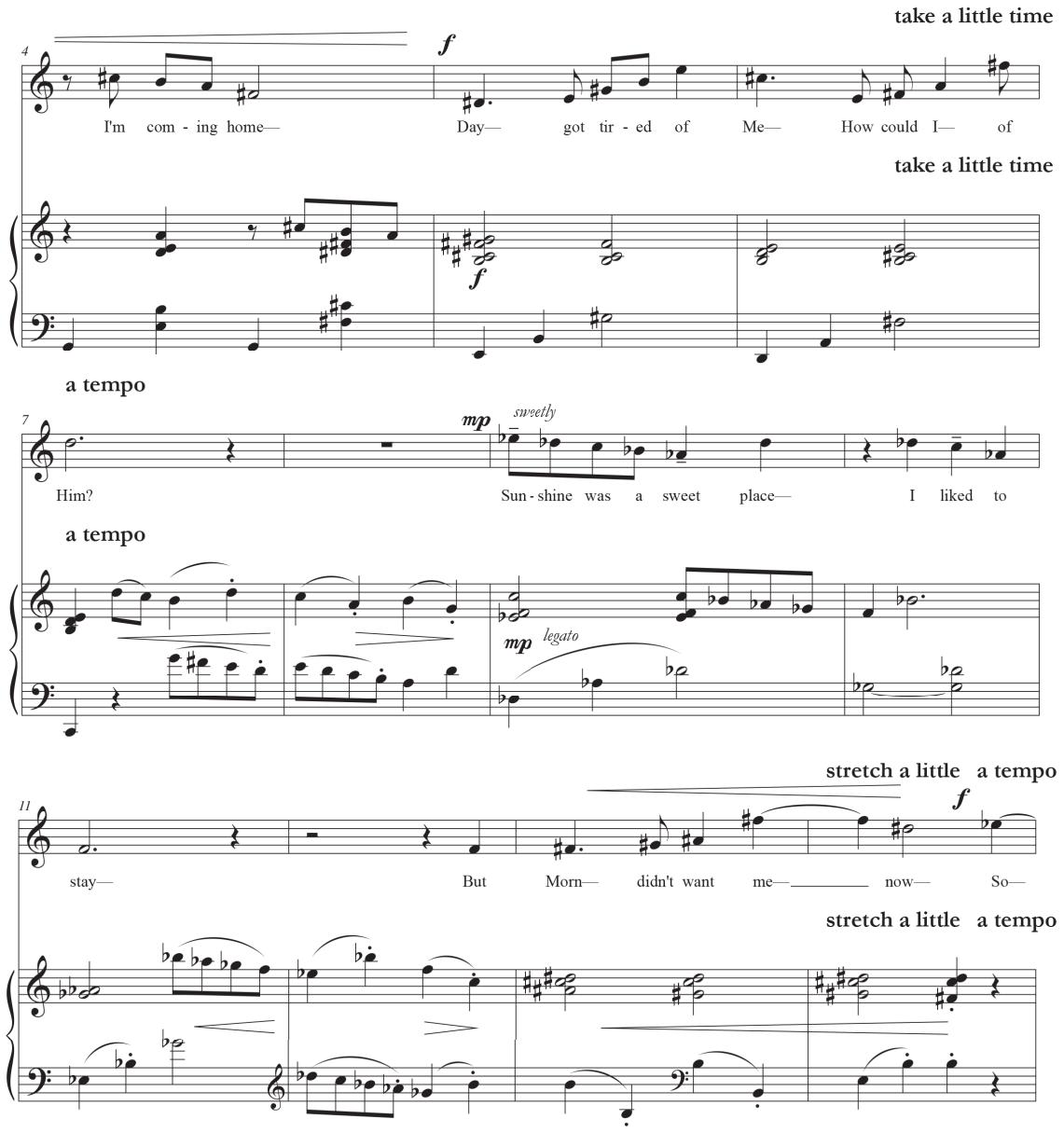
The musical mood follows the tone of the text, cute and sullen. As the text describes the different times and emotions, the music is completely through-composed, but with distinctive sections. The first part, mm. 1-8, depicts a little sulky girl who is coming back home at night. The opening piano part with jumping figures with accents and staccati represents the speaker’s emotion. Also, the harmonic conflicts between G major and F♯ major in mm. 1-2 produce a clashing sound. The opening vocal phrase on “Good morning – Midnight” continues the mood along with the leaping figure. The pitches, D-(C)-B-D, on “Good morning” at the opening returns as D-B♭-D on “Goodnight Day” in mm. 15-16, and it brings the same cute and sullky attitude of the character as the text delivers the ironic greeting (see Example 2.3).



Example 2.1. Laitman, “Good Morning Midnight,” mm. 1-3.

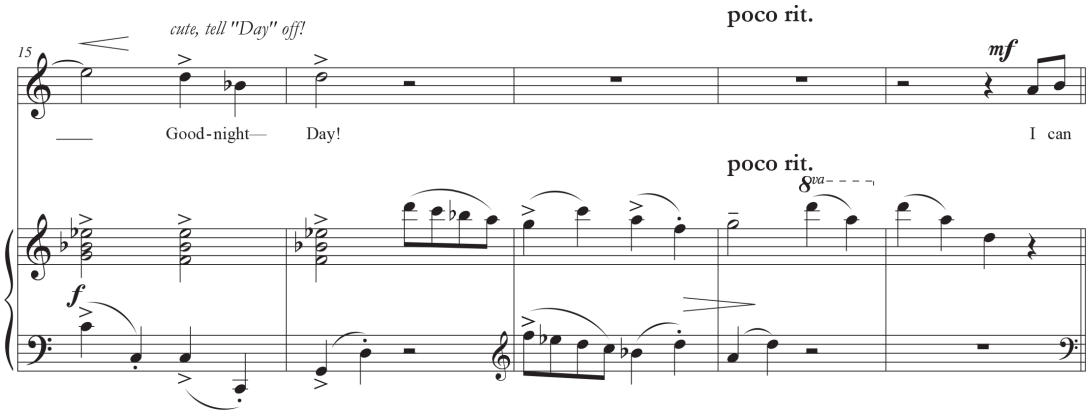
Laitman uses ascending and descending contours to express different emotions. The rising vocal phrases in mm. 5-6 on “Day – got tired of Me –” and “How could I – of Him?” deliver the state being rejected dramatically throughout unpredictable dissonances, leaps, and rhythms. On the other hand, the descending contour implies longing for “Day.” The speaker’s attitude is carried sweetly through the descending eighth notes on “Sunshine was a sweet place –” in m. 9, as the speaker longs for the sunshine in spite of rejections. The piano part in mm. 7-8 foreshadows this sweet descending motive of the voice line with legato. The following

descending arpeggio in voice settles on a long, low note as the text says “stay” in m. 11. But, the return of the rising motive interrupts the sweetness in m. 13 where the speaker is refused again by the morning.



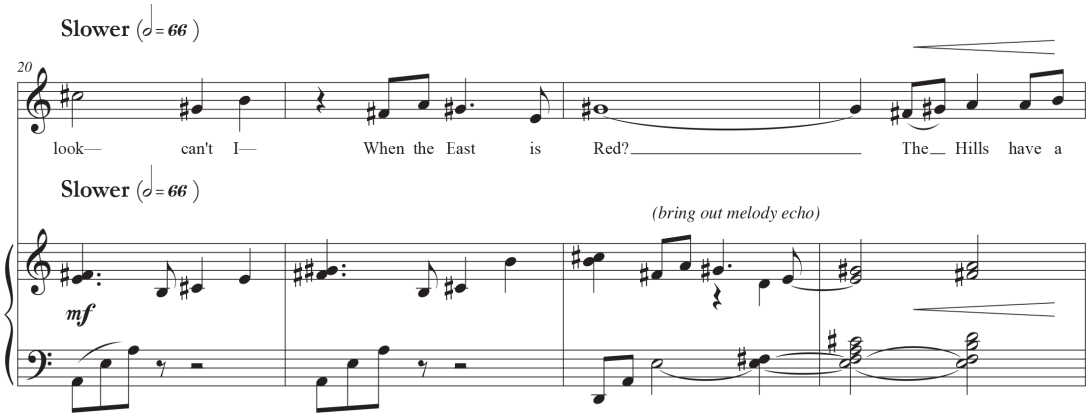
Example 2.2. Laitman, “Good Morning Midnight,” mm. 4-14.

The sound of the descending phrase is not always gentle. The series of dropping a perfect 4th and 5th in mm. 18-19 recalls a humorous aspect of the text. This cute insertion returns at the end as an emotional transition from pitifulness to jauntiness.



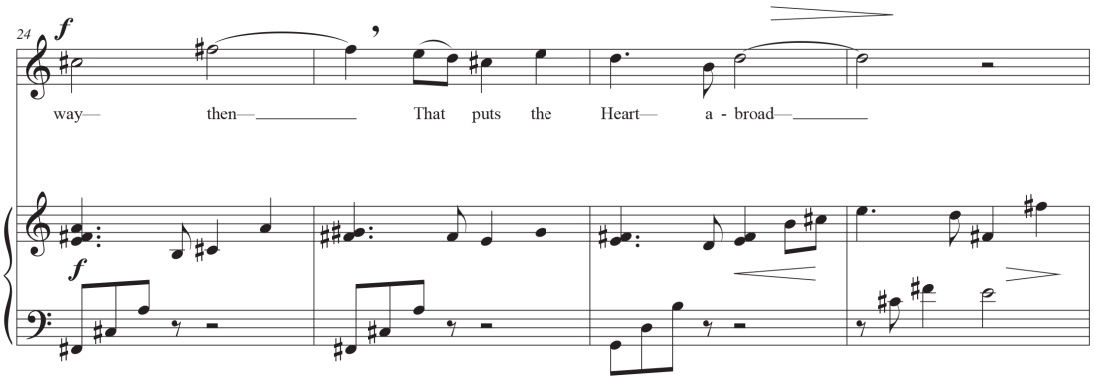
Example 2.3. Laitman, "Good Morning Midnight," mm. 15-19.

The mood changes dramatically from m. 20, where the text describes the picture of the sunrise. The score indicates slower tempo and 'very legato.' The vocal phrase is longer and more lyrical along with the arpeggiated accompaniment. The descending contour describes the sense of longing in this section again. The vocal melody largely descends through C♯-B-A-G♯ in mm. 20-22, as the text reveals the speaker's desire to see the morning. On the other hand, the ascending arpeggio in the piano works like the word painting of the sunrise. The following stepwise ascending vocal melody in mm. 23-24 directly depicts "The Hills" and sunrise. Likewise, the musical gestures of the section illustrate the image of the red sunlight broadly spreading over the hills.



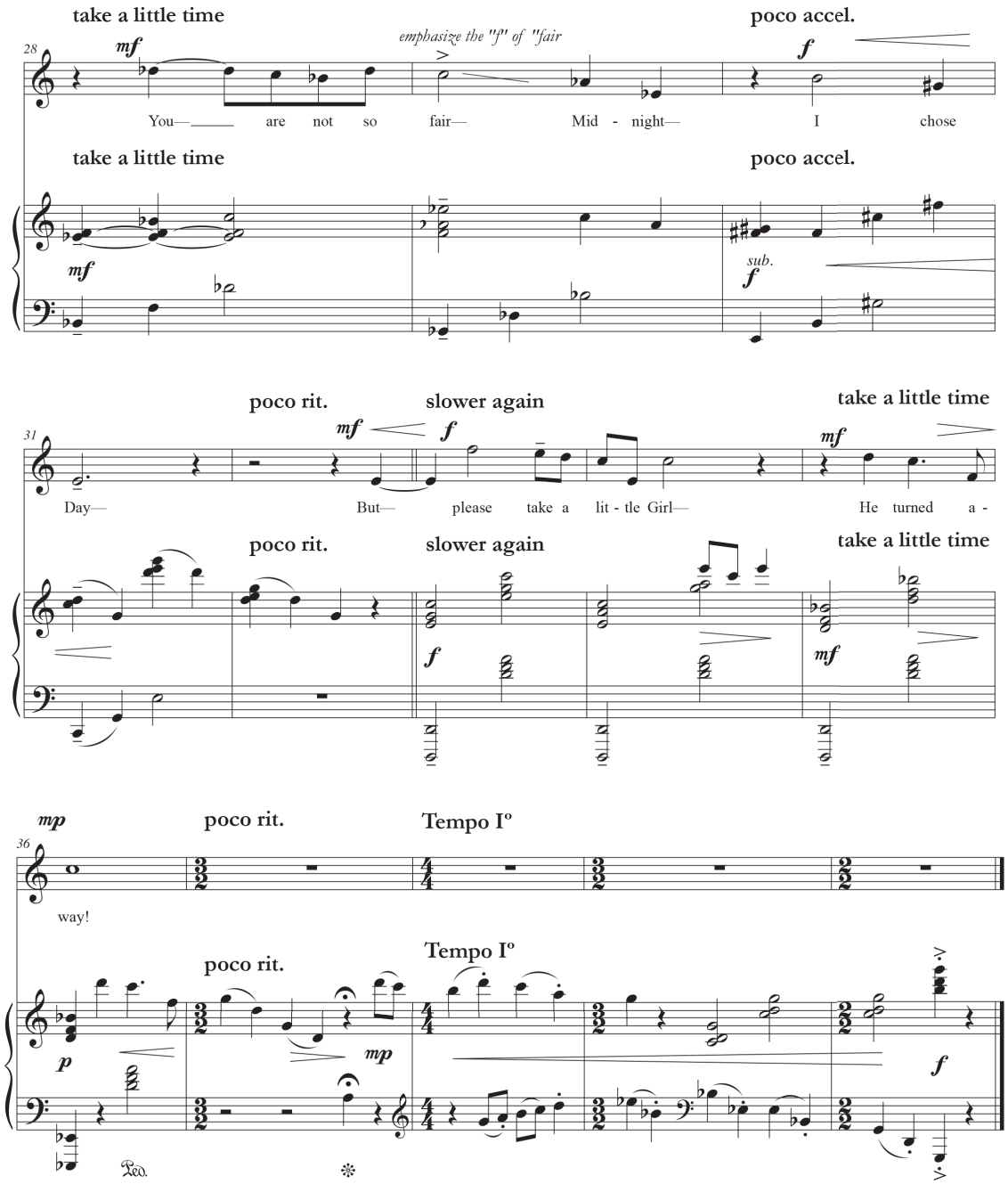
Example 2.4. Laitman, "Good Morning Midnight," mm. 20-23.

In this sectional piece, Laitman presents various harmonic colors by shifting tonal centers. The song begins with G major but with harmonic conflicts. The tonality obscures briefly in m. 5. The tonal center moves quickly in mm. 5-6 through descending bass, E-D-C (see Example 2.2). This descending movement implies the unreachable "Day" again. The tonal center seems to settle on Db major in m. 9, but it scatters soon and finalizes the section in G minor. In m. 20, the tonality implies A major. But the vague tonality shifts its tonal center to G major in m. 26.



Example 2.5. Laitman, "Good Morning Midnight," mm. 24-27.

The color of the harmony dramatically changes on "You are not so fair" in m. 28, through a B♭ minor sonority with E♭ producing a murky sound. But the harmony shifts again to E major on "I chose Day." The harmonic conflict between D minor and C major in m. 33 recalls the opening chords as the character speaks to the midnight again. With this harmonic conflict in the accompaniment jumping the registers of ***forte***, a large leap to a high note in m. 33 stresses the pleading word, "please." In m. 35, adding B♭ major above D minor generates a soft and gentle color with the text, "He turned away." The return of the opening theme ends the song brightly in G major.



Example 2.6. Laitman, "Good Morning Midnight," mm. 28-40.

2. Wider Than the Sky

The Brain – is wider than the Sky –
For – put them side by dise –
The one the other will contain
With ease – and You – beside –

The Brain is deeper than the sea –
For – hold them – Blue to Blue –
The one the other will absorb –
As Sponges – Buckets – do –

The Brain is just the weight of God –
For – Heft them – Pound for Pound –
And they will differ – if they do –
As Syllable from Sound –

(J632/ F598)[39]

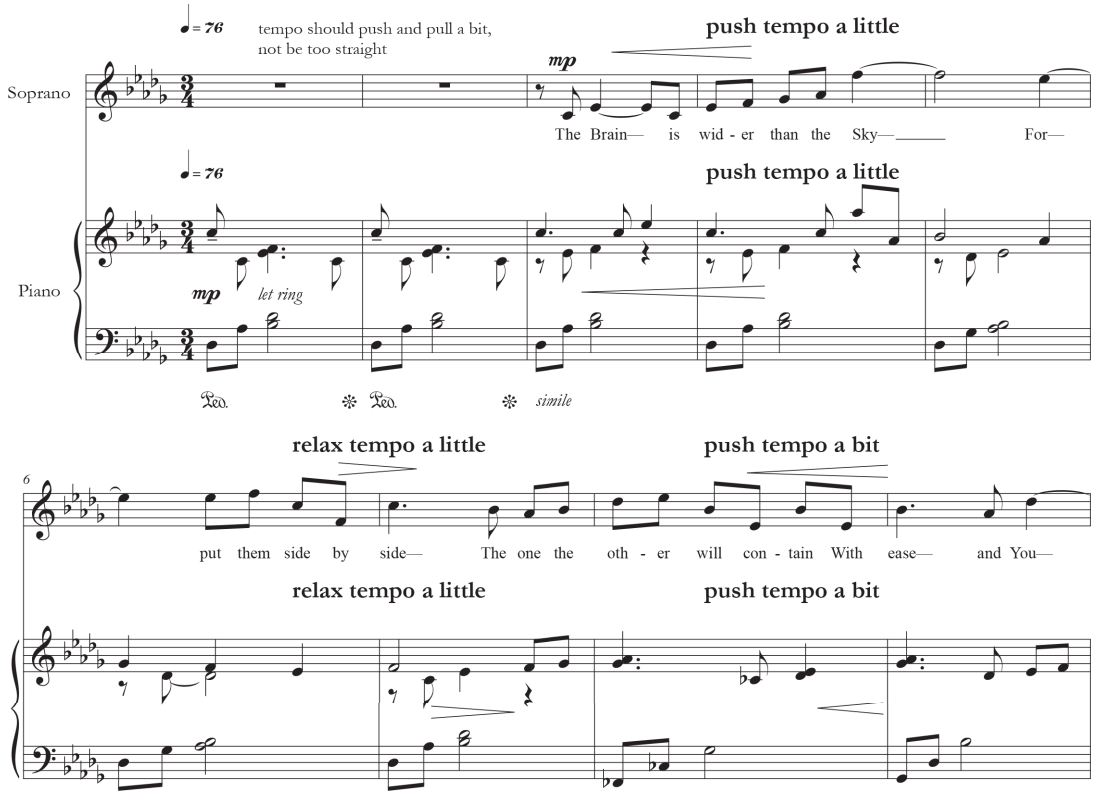
The poem speaks to the infinite potentiality of the brain through various metaphors. The brain is compared with the sky and the sea. It is wider and deeper as it can absorb everything in the universe. The brain, the chamber of infinite imagination, is even equal to God. The only difference between the brain and God is like "syllable from sound." The text is in a two plus one format: two stanzas with the comparative form and one stanza with the equal comparison.

Laitman reflects the images and the textual form in the song. Unlike the jaunty mood of the first song, "Good Morning Midnight," the vocal phrase is broad and lyrical as the text describes the comprehensive brain. *Tempo rubato* is important, and the composer indicates in detail where to push or relax tempo. This elastic tempo along with the lyrical phrase gives the sense of flexibility and ability our brain has. The form is more structural than the first song. This song is not strictly strophic, but the use of repetitive musical ideas follows the parallel structure of the poem.

In the first two stanzas, the word, "Brain," stands out by being set on a relatively longer and higher note than its neighboring notes. The dramatic rising motion on "is wider than the sky" in m. 4 and "is deeper than the sea" in m. 14 expresses the immensity of the brain. The musical idea on "side by side" in mm. 6-7 and "Blue to Blue" in mm.16-17 illustrates the image of a

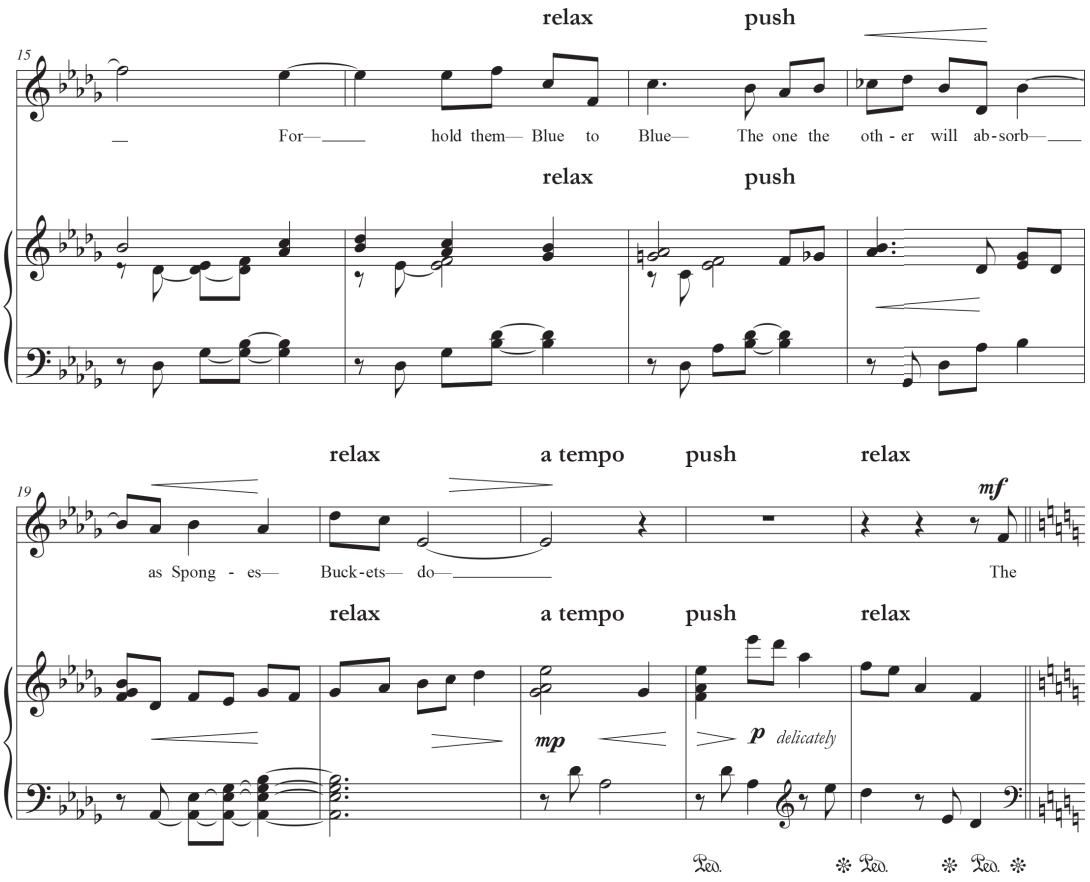
[39] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 486.

weighing scale by the use of the same pitch on “side” and “Blue.” This figure recurs on “Pound for Pound” in the third stanza in mm. 26-27. Like this, the first stanza and the second stanza are parallel in terms of both text and music.



Example 2.7. Laitman, “Wider Than The Sky,” mm. 1-9.

Laitman gives, however, delicacy between the first two stanzas to express the subtle difference of the images. The second stanza includes a *simile*, which explains the brain is large enough to absorb the sea like sponges can hold water in buckets. This picture of absorption is visualized in the score. Unlike m. 8, the pitches in m. 18 are dragged down as depicting the heavy sponges retaining water. Moreover, the piano part stacks and holds notes in the second stanza. Especially, a stack of notes on the dominant in the bass in m. 19 portrays the image of weight.



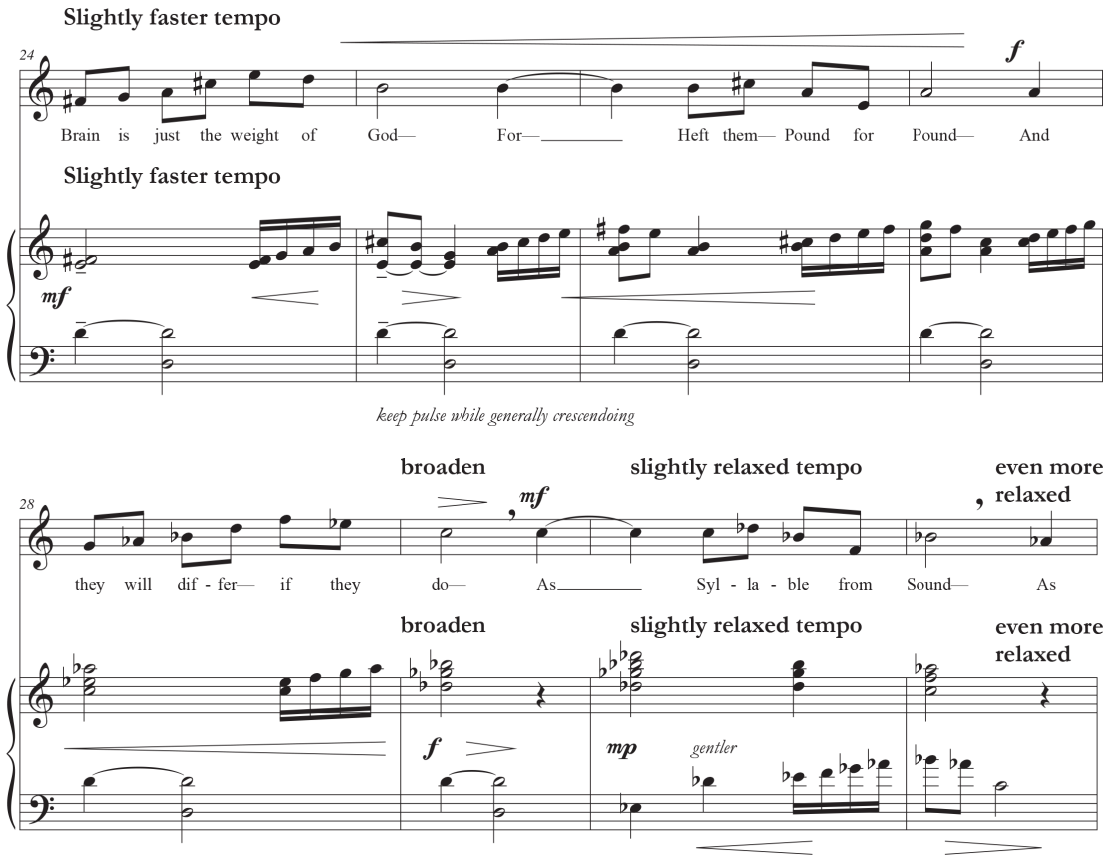
Example 2.8. Laitman, "Wider Than The Sky," mm. 15-23.

The third stanza shows dramatic musical changes as the text explains the brain in a different way. Usually, Laitman refuses to use a key signature in her songs to give herself the freedom to shift the tonal center.[40] But in this song, she uses the D♭ major key signature for the first two stanzas. The tonality is stated quite firmly, and she just adds dissonances or harmonic colors to the predominant area as shown in m. 8. The composer, however, removes the key signature in the third stanza. The tonality of the third stanza becomes vague, and the harmonic language begins traveling freely. This blurred tonality gets rid of the tonal hierarchy, like the text states equivalence between the human "Brain" and "the weight of God."

The new musical gestures in the third stanza provide a more exciting mood. The tempo is slightly faster, and the dynamic level is stronger. The animated movement of ascending-sixteenth

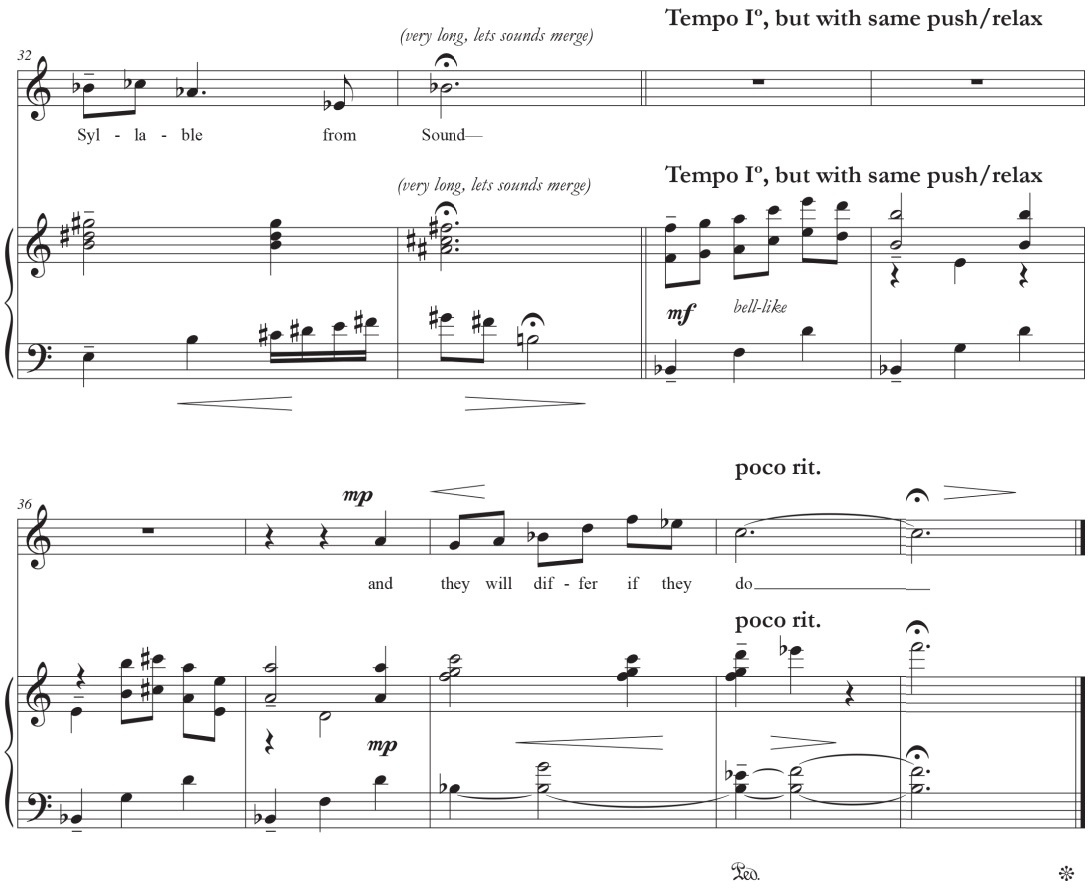
[40] Laitman, "FAQ."

figure in the accompaniment is vibrant. The new arch-shaped vocal phrase in m. 24 also pushes forward by moving immediately rather than holding a note on "Brain." This exciting musical mood changes in m. 30. The E♭ seventh chord and gentle sound with more relaxed tempo produce a special moment and emphasize the last verse, "As Syllable from Sound –."



Example 2.9. Laitman, "Wider Than The Sky," mm. 24-31.

The repetition of music and words in the ending part in mm. 34-40 echoes the last two verses, "And they will differ – if they do – As Syllable from Sound –."



Example 2.10. Laitman, "Wider Than The Sky," mm. 32-40.

In This Short Life (2011)

In This Short Life, for soprano and piano[41]

1. Some Keep The Sabbath
2. I Stepped from Plank to Plank
3. In This Short Life

Laitman's recent work, *In This Short Life*, was dedicated to her family. Laitman wrote the first song on April 13-21, 2009 for her mother, Josephine Laitman's 90th birthday and the second

[41] Lori Laitman, *In This Short Life: Three Emily Dickinson Settings: For Soprano and Piano* (United States: Enchanted Knickers Music, 2010).

song on July 6-17, 2010 for her 92nd birthday. The third song composed on March 29-30, 2011 is a present for her father's 95th birthday. The premiere recording of this cycle is included in the recording, *Experience*, along with her other cycles, "The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs" and "Sunflower," and songs by Richard Pearson Thomas. The songs were performed by Natalie Mann, soprano and Jeffrey Panko, piano and released on November 1, 2013, by Albany Records.

When she dedicates a song as a gift, Laitman tries to select a poem with appropriate text.[42] The common theme of the poems in this cycle is life, as the songs are for her parents' birthdays. Each poem illustrates the different characteristics of our life: spiritual, unpredictable, and finite life. Laitman titled the cycle as "In This Short Life." This group of three songs lasts for less than six minutes, which corresponds to the title. Gregory Berg evaluates that "emotional and poetic range is a bit more modest in scope. But there is a staggering amount of beauty and profundity in these sublime miniatures, each of which features the incomparable poetry of Emily Dickinson."[43] In this cycle, Laitman shows word painting in abundance that brings out Dickinson's vivid imagery.

1. Some Keep The Sabbath

Some keep the Sabbath going to Church –
I keep it, staying at Home –
With a Bobolink for a Chorister –
And an Orchard, for a Dome –

Some keep the Sabbath in Surplice –
I, just wear my Wings –
And instead of tolling the Bell, for Church,
Our little Sexton – sings.

God preaches, a noted Clergyman –
And the sermon is never long,
So instead of getting to Heaven, at last –
I'm going, all along.

(J324/ F236)[44]

[42] Laitman, "FAQ."
[43] Gregory Berg, "Experience: Songs by Lori Laitman & Richard Pearson Thomas," *Journal of Singing, 71*, no. 4 (March/April 2015): 550.
[44] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 254-55.

The poem is one of fewer than 10 poems Dickinson titled by herself, and she called it "My Sabbath."[45] The text shows Emily Dickinson's view of religion. Even though she refused to profess the faith to God in public and to join the church, it was "not out of defiance but in order to remain true to herself."[46] The first and second stanzas compare the traditional church service to the speaker's own worship.

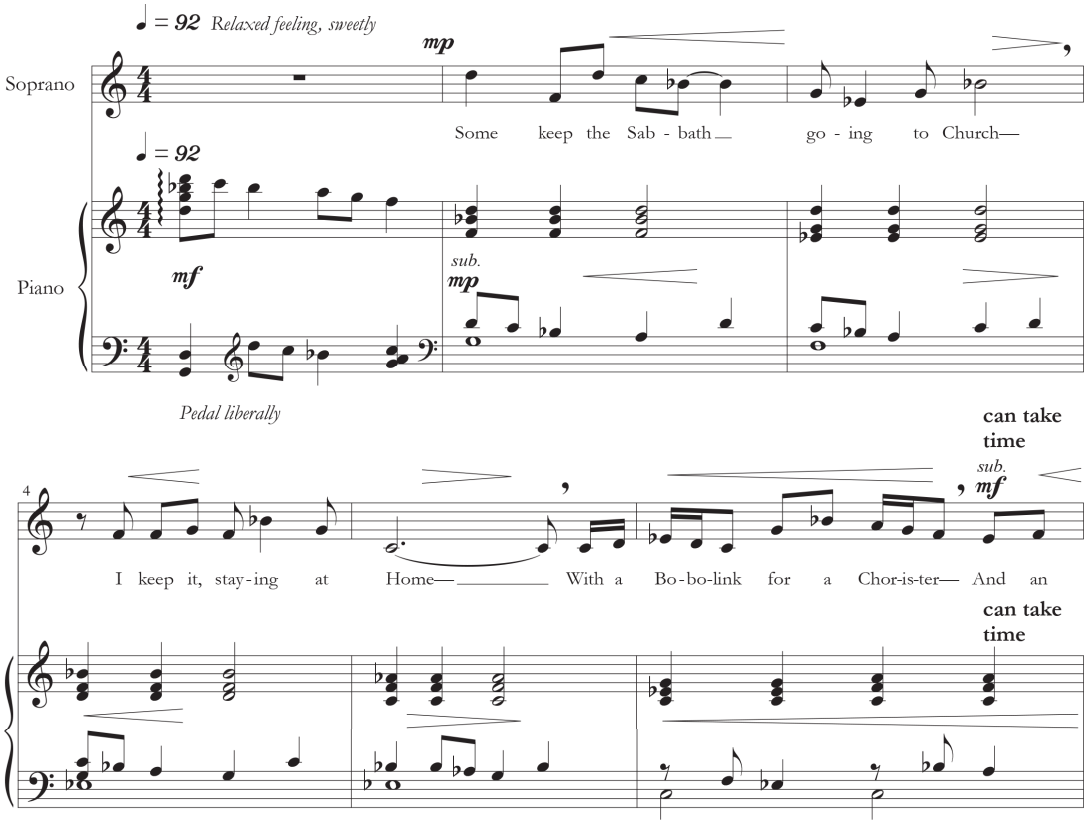
Table 2.1. Comparison between Traditional Service and the Speaker's Worship

Church Service	The Speaker's Worship
"Some"	"I"
"Church"	"Home"
"Chorister"	"Bobolink"
"Dome"	"Orchard"
"Surplice"	"My Wings"
"Bell"	"Sexton" = Bobolink

The atmosphere of the speaker's worship is homely and free without formality, unlike the conventional church service. It is more secluded and engaged with home, garden, and nature.

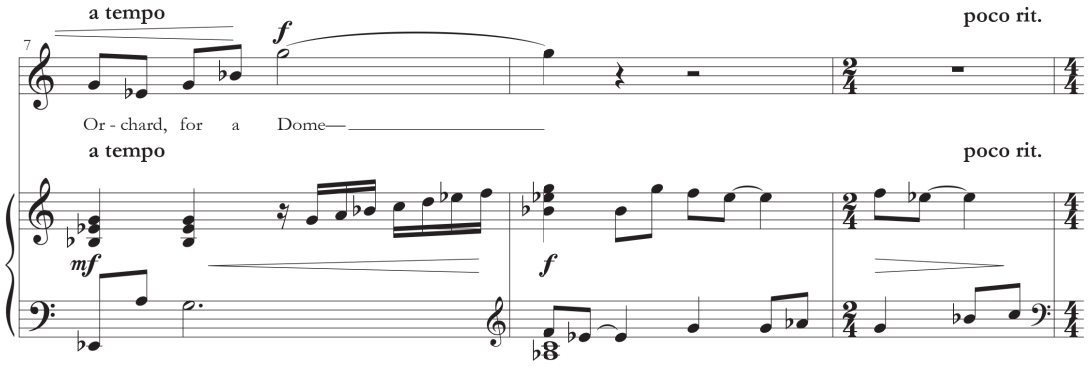
Laitman delicately delivers the images of the words into her song setting. The song opens with a hymn-like tune on "Some keep the Sabbath going to Church –" in mm. 2-3. The rhythm and melody are quite simple, and the accompaniment starts playing four-part chords with the tenor melody. This tune returns with a simpler harmony when the text says "Some keep the Sabbath in Surplice" in mm. 10-11. On the other hand, in m. 6, the figure of "Bobolink" moves through sixteenth notes mimicking a bird's singing.

[45] Cooley, 141; Trustees of Amherst College, "Major Characteristics of Dickinson's Poetry."
[46] Trustees of Amherst College, "Emily Dickinson and the Church," https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/church.



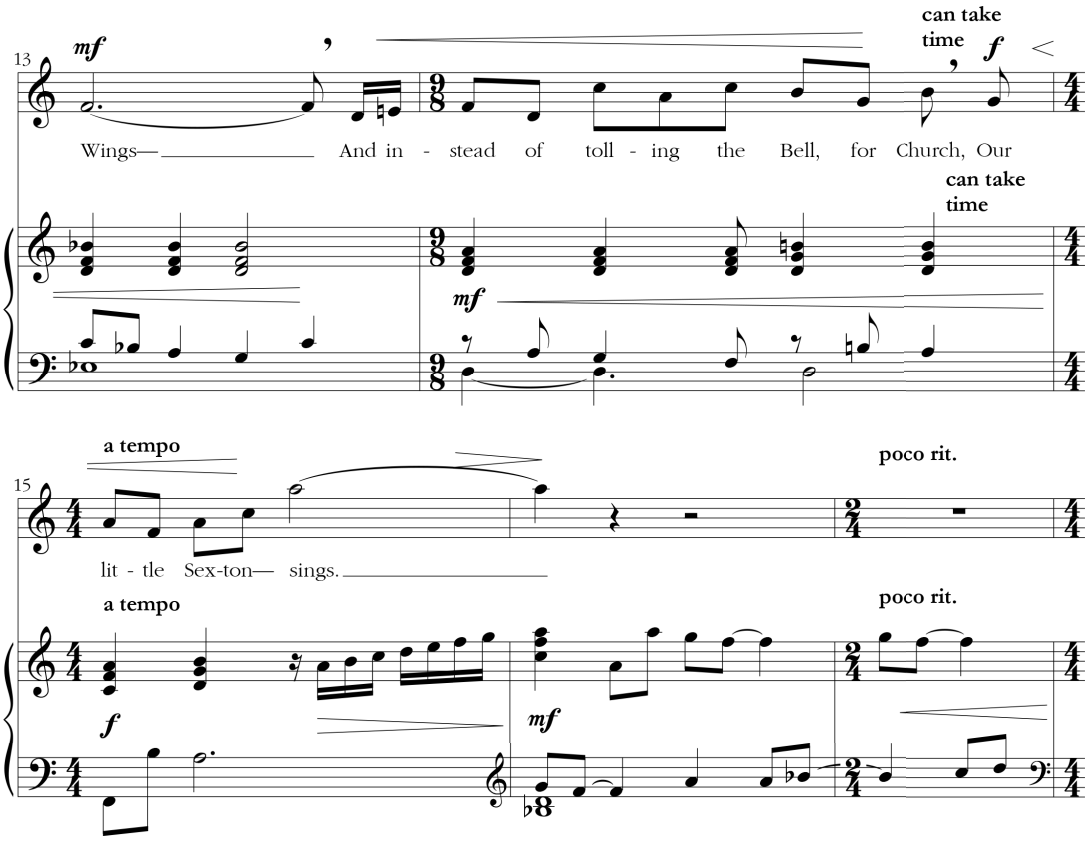
Example 2.11. Laitman, "Some Keep The Sabbath," mm. 1-6.

The register play is also used for Dickinson's rhyme scheme of "Home" and "Dome." The composer places "Home" on the low part of the vocal range, C_4. It gives a stable and comfortable feeling of home. On the contrary, the melody leaps to a high note, G_5 on "Dome" through an arpeggio that opens up the space like the meaning of the word. The ascending sixteenths with crescendo in m. 7 enhance the rising movement toward the high space.



Example 2.12. Laitman, "Some Keep The Sabbath," mm. 7-9.

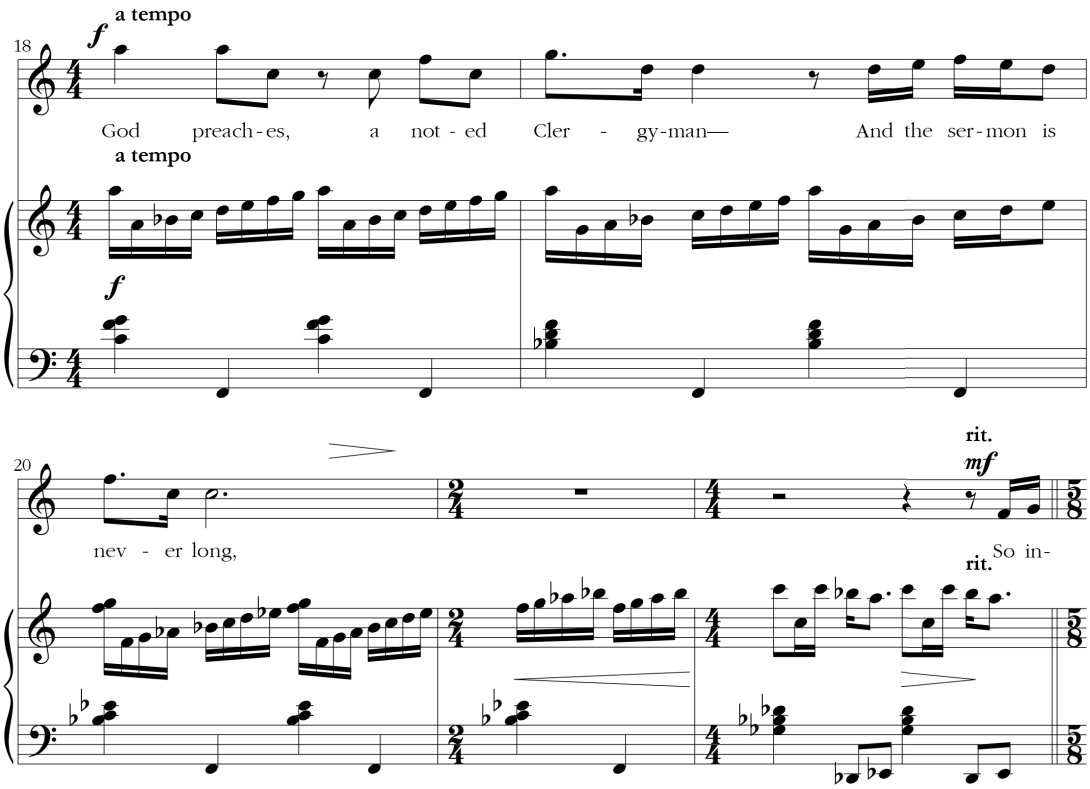
This upward movement both in voice and piano is more intense on “Our little Sexton sings” in m. 15 with higher notes, A_5. The composer also illustrates the sound of the “Bell” in an interesting way. The measure 14 corresponds to the measure 6 which contains the image of a bobolink (see Example 2.11). But instead of the animated movement, the meter changes to 9/8 in m. 14, and each syllable takes the eighth note equally. The melody sings through an up-and-down motion. These rhythmic and melodic figures imitate a church bell. Moreover, the unusual grouping of eighth notes with 2-3-2-2, instead of 3-3-3, effectively carries the prosody of the verse.



Example 2.13. Laitman, “Some Keep The Sabbath,” mm. 13-17.

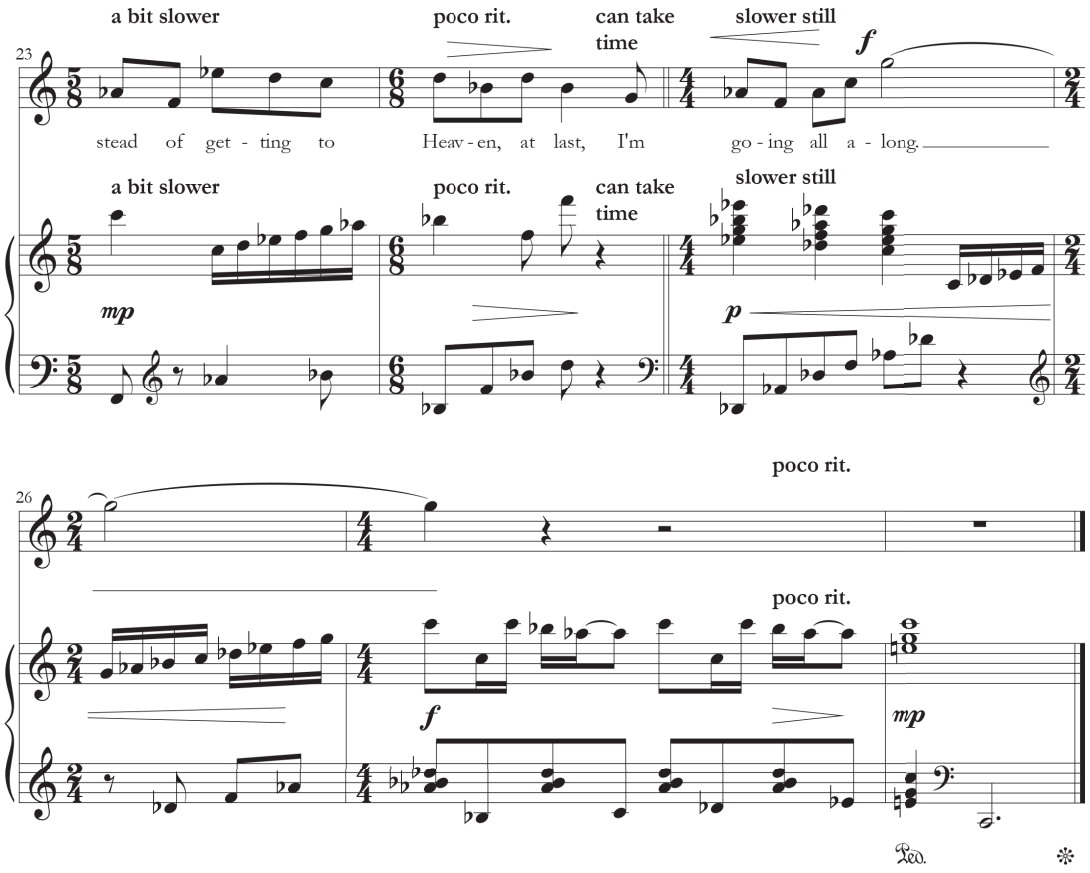
The third stanza describes the speaker’s intimate relationship with God. In her worship, “God preaches” directly to her, and “the sermon is never long.” It implies Dickinson’s sarcastic view on an indirect and long speech of a priest in the church. The end of the poem places more weight on the present rather than the future. The spiritual life along with God in the present is more meaningful for her than merely getting to heaven at the end of life.

The beginning of the third stanza in mm. 18-20 is a highlight of the song as the text illustrates this core meaning of her own worship. It consists of high notes and higher tessitura. The accompaniment is much richer with continuously rolling sixteenth notes in the right hand, and the left hand jumps the registers. This section expresses great excitement of a personal and spiritual meeting with God. In addition, in m. 22, rhythmic diminution – shortening of the note values – of the opening vocal figure enhances the exciting atmosphere.



Example 2.14. Laitman, "Some Keep The Sabbath," mm. 18-22.

The "bell" figure of m. 14, however, interrupts the mood in mm. 23-24 as the text corresponds to the traditional church again. Like m. 14, it follows the flow of words through meter changes. But this time, ascending sixteenth notes in the right hand occurs in m. 23 as a word painting of "getting to Heaven." This ascending figure extends doubled in mm. 25-26 as "going all along" with God is more important to the speaker. The long, high note, G_5, on "along" implies her continuous spiritual journey. The high register of the accompaniment in m. 27 and the final C major chord at the end represent a heavenly and thrilling meeting with God.



Example 2.15. Laitman, "Some Keep The Sabbath," mm. 23-28.

2. I Stepped from Plank to Plank

I stepped from Plank to Plank
A slow and cautious way
The Stars about my Head I felt
About my Feet the Sea.

I knew not but the next
Would be my final inch –
This gave me that precarious Gait
Some call Experience.

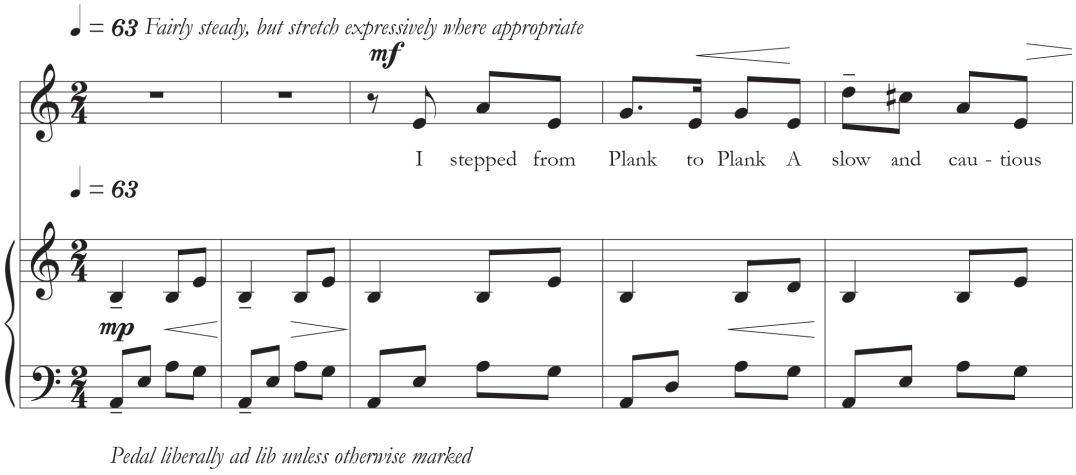
(J875/ F926)[47]

This metaphoric poem illustrates the image of a person carefully crossing a narrow wooden bridge. This image explains our life as a journey "from plank to plank." We slowly and

[47] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 650.

cautiously walk across each “plank” because we do not know what will come next in our life. It could be “the Stars” and “the Sea.” “Plank” may represent all of the moments – joy and sorrow – in our life. We do not know if the next “plank” could be our final one, death, so it makes us feel precarious. We have a power, however, to sublimate “precarious Gait” into a valuable “Experience.” The little song setting embodies the images of these metaphoric words and the speaker’s attitude toward life.

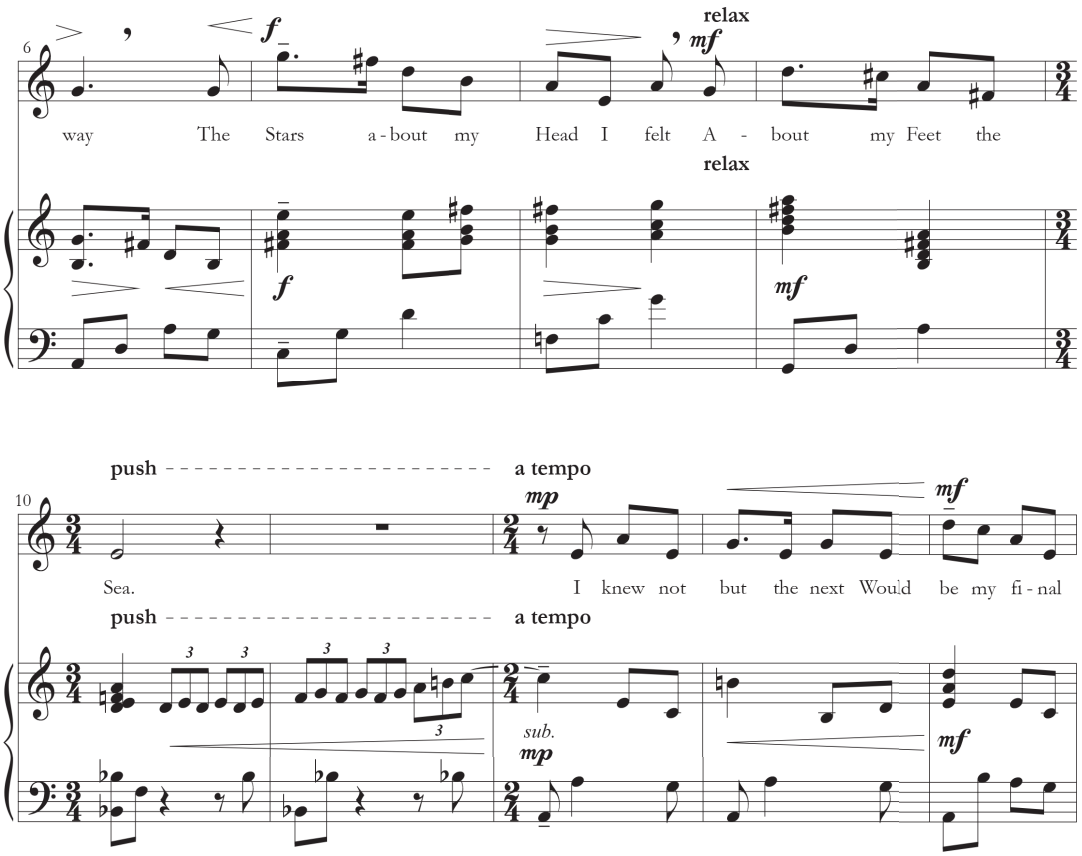
The accompaniment opens with the steady rhythmic and melodic pattern imitating the walking figure. The slow tempo and the tonality in A minor with its dissonance, B, visualize the ‘slow and cautious’ gaits. The vocal melody contains this walking motive but varies it in accordance with the text. The dotted rhythm on “plank” in m. 4 not only gives an image of one’s careful gait but also implies different moments and times in one’s life.



Example 2.16. Laitman, “I Stepped from Plank to Plank,” mm. 1-5.

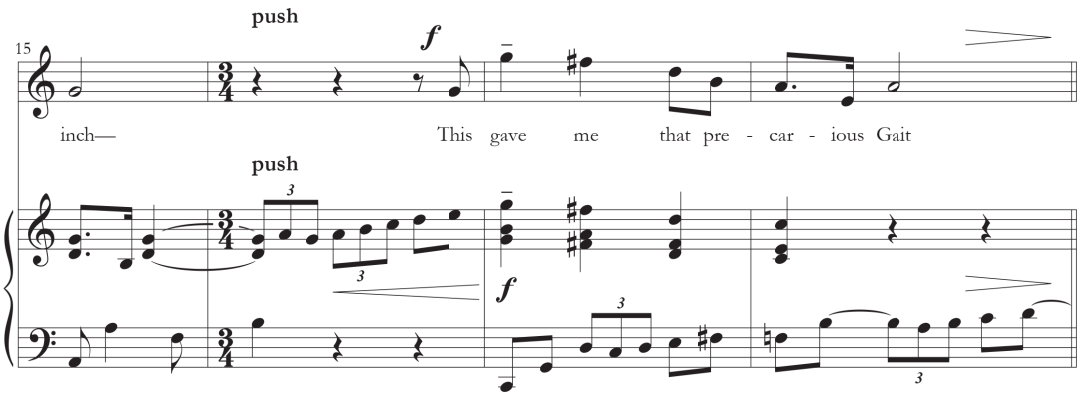
In m. 5, the voice line on “A slow and cautious” leaps up and drops down with C♯, which generates A major color. This motive recurs and varies in mm. 7, 9, 14, and 17. Laitman uses different registers to contrast high and low places, as the text includes “Stars” and “Head” in m. 7 and “Feet” and “Sea” in m. 9. The consecutive seventh chords in the right hand of the piano part in mm. 7-10 (F♯^{ø7}-GMM7-Amm7-Bmm7-B♭MM7) enrich the harmonic colors, as the text

exemplifies various experiences. The following murmuring pattern of triplets in the right hand depicts "the Sea" in mm. 10-11.



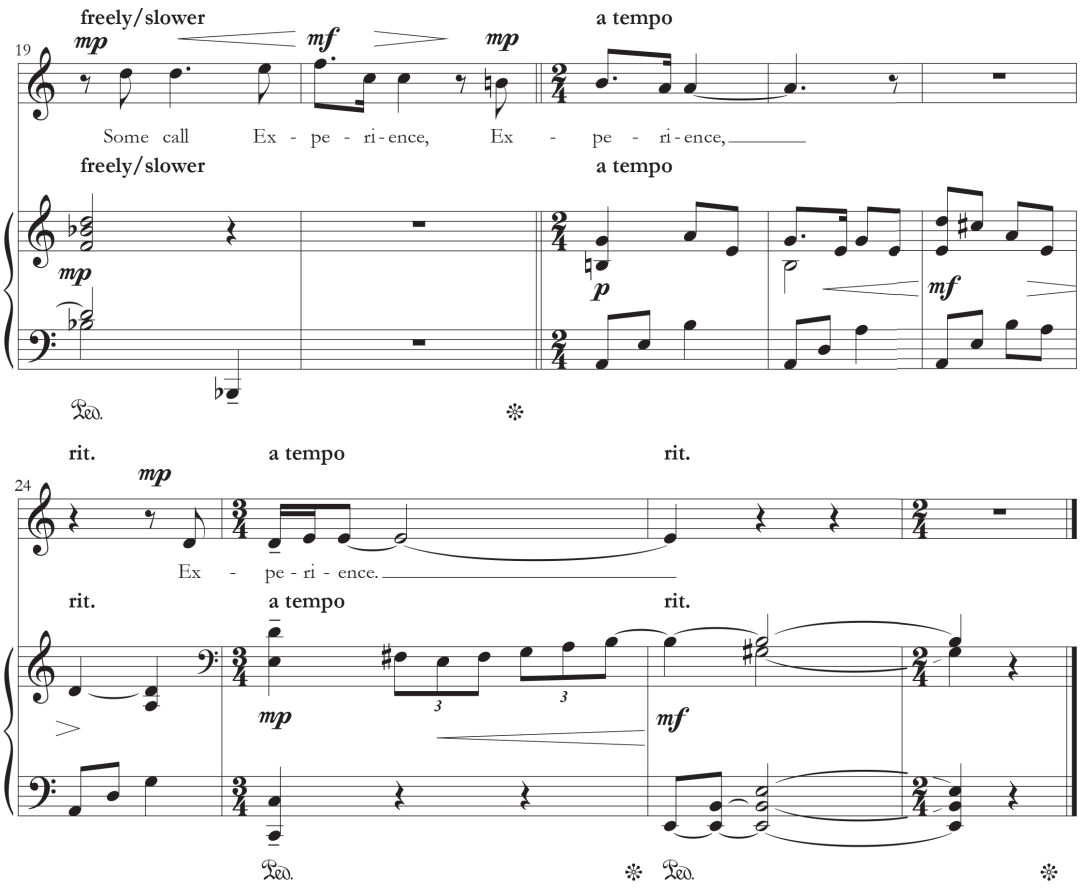
Example 2.17. Laitman, "I Stepped from Plank to Plank," mm. 6-14.

The murmuring gesture overlaps the image of the "precarious Gait" in mm. 16-18 and appears again in m. 25. The dropping motive recurs on "be my final inch –" in m. 14. But it excludes C♯ to retain A minor quality because the text implies the death. The rhythm of the motive expands with a meter change to 3/4 in m. 17. The rhythmic change highlights the part by sustaining the high notes slightly longer unlike m. 7. The composer uses this dropping motive in various ways in terms of range, rhythm, and harmony (mm. 5, 7, 9, 14, and 17). Each variation represents each "Plank" in our life.



Example 2.18. Laitman, "I Stepped from Plank to Plank," mm. 15-18.

Laitman emphasizes "Experience" by repetition as well as musical variations. The word appears three times in the song unlike the original poem. In m. 19, the music changes drastically with the first appearance of the word. It becomes slower and more silent. The accompaniment stops its figures and just holds the B♭ major chord. For the second "Experience" in m. 21, the major quality switches to minor, and the accompaniment recalls the opening of the song. The last "Experience" in m. 24, on the other hand, includes the murmuring pattern, and both hands are in low register with the ambiguous tonal ending on E major. The murmuring pattern and the major feeling with tonal ambiguity express the unpredictable but optimistic aspect of our "Experience." By assigning different musical features on the repetition of "Experience," the composer expresses the journey of life on a variety of "planks."



Example 2.19. Laitman, "I Stepped from Plank to Plank," mm. 19-27.

3. In This Short Life

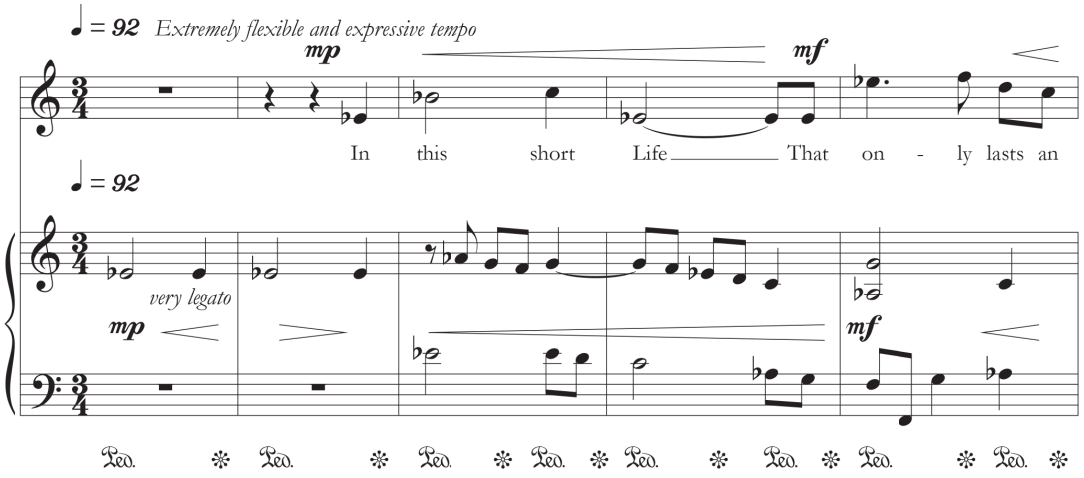
In this short Life
That only lasts an hour
How much – how little – is
Within our power

(J1287/ F1292)[48]

This brief poem tells about the finiteness of our life and our power. The text contains simple words and short verses, but the meaning is profound. The poet speaks in a calm tone, and the song delivers the tranquil mood with flexible tempo and legato phrases.

[48] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 894.

Laitman reflects the poet's thought on our life through various musical effects. Firstly, frequent *messa di voce* describes our short life like a dayflower that blooms and withers in a brief span of time. This dynamic figure also perfectly fits the verse, "How much – how little –." The brief prelude with a single note, E♭, firstly shows *messa di voce*. This blooming effect develops in terms of the texture and contour; from E♭, the voice and piano expand the range through a contrary motion. Secondly, the stepwise descending movement in both hands in mm. 3-4 represents our fading life. The figure recurs several times throughout the entire song. Sometimes the descending gesture takes a dotted rhythm that recalls the previous song, "I Stepped from Plank to Plank." Last but not least, Laitman indicates pedal marks in detail unlike other songs in this cycle. Usually, Laitman prefers a blurred sound by sustaining harmonies to merge each other.[49] In this piece, however, she marks 'pedal down' and 'pedal up' almost every measure throughout the entire song. As a result, the sound releases very shortly, especially in the first system as the text speaks about our short life.

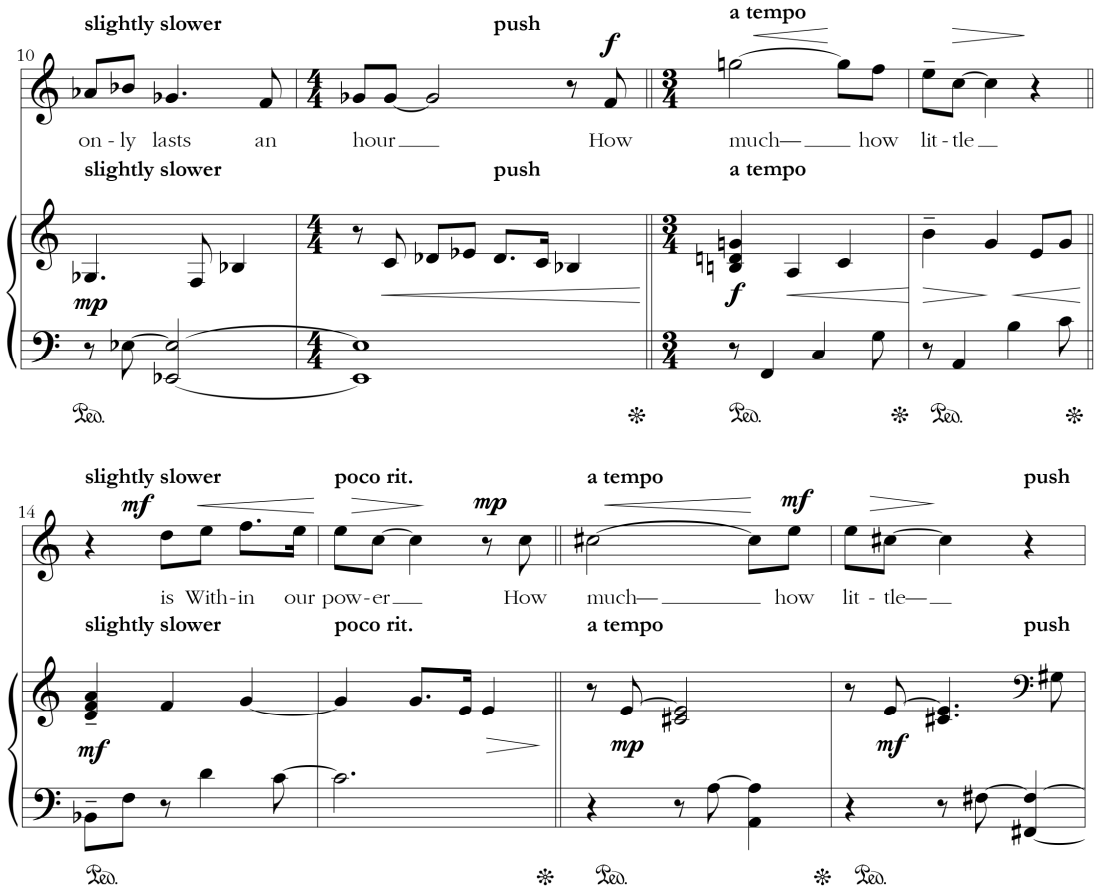


Example 2.20. Laitman, "In This Short Life," mm. 1-5.

The composer repeats each verse of the poem twice, and she chooses to express "How much – how little –" in two different ways. In mm. 12-13, "how much" has a huge leap from F_4 to G_5. By contrast, the second time in mm.15-16 takes a half step, C to C♯, which is a small space

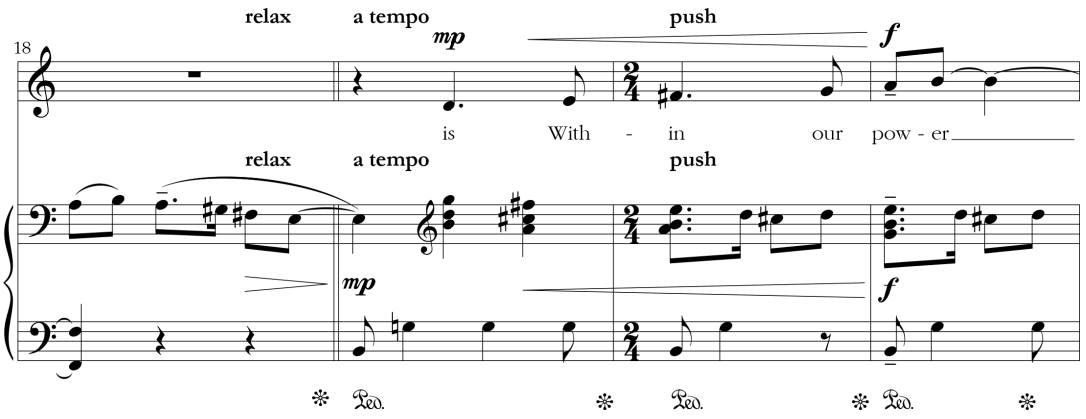
[49] Laitman, "FAQ."

between two different pitches. The interval is an augmented unison which feels even closer than a minor second. It is interesting to express “much” with a very small interval.



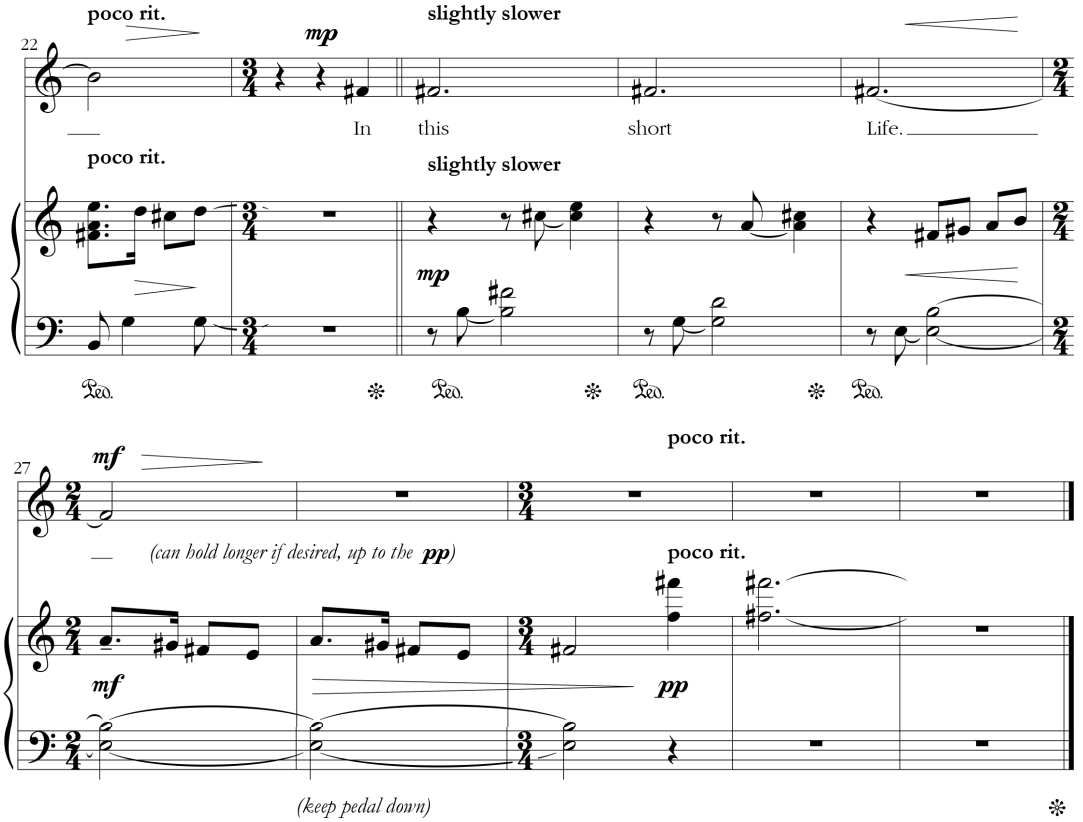
Example 2.21. Laitman, “In This Short Life,” mm. 10-17.

The keywords, “hour” and “power,” take an unusual rhythmic pattern. Laitman chooses the short-long rhythm, while it is natural to have the long-short rhythm on these words according to the accents. This rhythmic oddity enhances the sense of the limit of our time and control by shortening the strong syllable and by lengthening the weak syllable. In spite of her choice of rhythm, the accent keeps alive through the blooming effect. When the speaker says, “is within our power” in mm. 19-21, the long ascending vocal phrase in G major strengthens the image of “power,” but this rhythmic pattern restricts the growth of “power.”



Example 2.22. Laitman, "In This Short Life," mm. 18-21.

The composer repeats the first verse at the end, and the image and mood of the text remain. The final statement in mm. 24-27 switches the voice and piano parts of the opening. The voice sings a single reciting tone, F♯, like the piano at the beginning. The bass plays fifths, which is the opening interval of the voice part, and sets E minor at the end.



Example 2.23. Laitman, "In This Short Life," mm. 22-31.

Unlike the overall part of the song, the composer indicates ‘keep pedal down’ for six measures, and it results in the blending of pitches of the E major scale, E, F♯, G♯, A, and B. This final E major chord recalls the optimistic ending like the previous song, “I Stepped from Plank to Plank.” But Laitman’s pedal technique that blurs E major sound and the descending figure in the right hand remind us of our fading life.

The pitch relationship over the entire song expresses “How much” and “How little.” The song begins with E♭ and ends on E♮ with addition of F♯. The augmented unison between E♭ and E♮ is equal to the relationship between C and C♯ on “How much” in mm. 15-16. Furthermore, the relationship of the interval E♭ to final F♯ is an augmented second. Laitman brings out the images of “much” and “little” coincidentally through the small interval number and the large interval quality.

Chapter 3: JAKE HEGGIE (B. 1961)

Biography

Jake Heggie (b. 1961), a composer and pianist, is "arguably the world's most popular 21st-century opera and art song composer."[1] Heggie, known as a celebrated American opera composer, has also composed about 300 songs as well as choral and instrumental music. His operas have been performed frequently and internationally in world-class opera theatres. Also, his music has been championed by first-rate singers including sopranos Kiri Te Kanawa, Renée Fleming, Joyce Didonato, Susan Graham, William Burden, Nathan Gunn, and Bryn Terfel, among others.[2] His works have been recorded on various labels such as EMI Classics, Naxos, Virgin Classics, Erato, PentaTone Classics, Albany, etc.[3]

Jake Heggie (John Stephen Heggie) was born on March 31, 1961, in West Palm Beach, but his family wandered across the States, from Florida to California, and to Ohio, owing to his father's severe depression, which was possibly rooted in his service in Japan during World War II as an Army doctor. Heggie says "he moved jobs quite a bit, because it was very difficult to stay happy for any length of time in one place."[4] But his father, an amateur saxophone player, naturally gave Heggie interest in music. He began playing the piano around the age of 6. When his family settled in Bexley, a suburb of Columbus, Ohio, his parents bought a small piano with 64 keys. According to him, he fell in love with the piano immediately and practiced all the time with joy.[5] Music became a consolation to this young boy. Heggie mentions, "that is where I felt

[1] David Littlejohn, "A West Coaster With a Global Reputation," *Wall Street Journal*, March 2, 2015, Monday.

[2] Jake Heggie, "Biography," The Official Website of Jake Heggie, Composer & Pianist, accessed December 5, 2018, https://jakeheggie.com.

[3] Heggie, "Recordings," https://jakeheggie.com/recordings.

[4] Ralph Blumenthal, "For an Operatic Life, Check Out the Composer's," *New York Times*, March 13, 2008, Thursday; Matthew Sigman, "Composing a Life," *Opera News*, July 2015, 26.

[5] David F. Wylie, "Jake Heggie: A Singer's Composer," *Classical Singer*, January 1, 2011, accessed on November 23, 2018, https://www.csmusic.net/content/articles/jake-heggie.

safe and secure, where I could express emotion."[6] His father's condition worsened, and he committed suicide a week before Heggie's eleventh birthday. Around that time, he began writing songs in the hope of finding peace in music.[7]

The family moved to the Bay Area in California when he was 16, and he started to study with Ernst Bacon. At age 18, after high school, he moved to Paris hoping to pursue a life as a pianist. Heggie remarks, "the whole romance of Paris, especially since I was so into solo repertoire then. And with Chopin, and Liszt, and all those people who spent so much of their time in Paris in that period, I wanted to be there."[8] However, he found that he needed a more systemized curriculum and environment. Thus, he came back to the U.S to study with the pianist Johana Harris at the University of California, Los Angeles when he was 20.[9]

While at UCLA, Heggie mastered all the song cycles of Schumann, Schubert, Brahms, and Wolf.[10] The relationship with his teacher, Harris, developed into marriage in 1982, when he was 21, and she was 70. "She was the first person who saw something in me," Heggie says.[11] He finished school in 1984, and the couple toured all over the country as a piano duo.[12] However, he had a difficult time from 1988 with focal dystonia in his right hand. Also, Harris was suffering from cancer in the early 1990s, and she moved to her daughter's home.[13] Heggie stopped writing and playing and decided to leave Los Angeles and move to San Francisco in 1993 to take care of himself. He and Harris remained married until Johana's death in 1995. Heggie admires Harris' musical legacy, which has influenced him not only as a pianist but also as a composer. He states,

---

[6] Sigman, 26.

[7] Wylie; Sigman, 26.

[8] Alanna Keenan, "A Performer's Guide to Jake Heggie's The Deepest Desire: Four Meditations on Love" (D.M.A. diss., Louisiana State University, 2009), 5, accessed December 2, 2018, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

[9] Carolyn E. Redman, "Songs to the Moon": A Song Cycle by Jake Heggie from Poems by Vachel Lindsay" (D.M.A. diss., Ohio State University, 2004), 3, accessed November 26, 2018, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

[10] Wylie.

[11] Blumenthal.

[12] Redman, 4.

[13] Redman, 4; David Mermelstein, "He's Got a Song in His Art," *Los Angeles Times*, November 10, 1996, Sunday.

"music was a language for her, and she taught me how to speak that language,"[14] and "There isn't a day that I am writing that I don't think about something that she said to me. Her spirit is in every note I write."[15]

In San Francisco, he worked in the public relations department of the San Francisco Opera and began playing the piano again. When he worked for the world premiere of Conrad Susa's *The Dangerous Liaisons* starring Renée Fleming, Frederica von Stade, Thomas Hampson, Mary Mills, and Johanna Meier in 1994, Heggie got inspired to write music again.[16] On the opening night of the production, he presented his folk-song arrangements to mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade for a gift. She was very impressed with his music and agreed to record his demo for the G. Schirmer American Art Song Competition in 1995, which Heggie won with his Emily Dickinson setting, "If you were coming in the Fall," recorded by Kristin Clayton.[17] Von Stade, amazed by his talent, asked him to write songs for her. She has remained a very special person in his life as a composer:

> She began to ask me to play for her and commissioned pieces and also arranged commissions for me. She has been my biggest champion. She also came into my life right around the time that Johana died. Ms. von Stade had no idea, but one piece that Johana had always improvised on in recitals was Danny Boy. It just so happened that this was the very first piece Flicka (von Stade) asked me to arrange.[18]

Afterward, this young talented composer was sought out by many prolific singers such as Renée Fleming, Dawn Upshaw, and Bryn Terfel.[19] In 1996, Lotfi Mansouri, general director of the San Francisco Opera at that time, suggested to him that he write an opera for the new millennium and gave him a commission.[20] That was how his first opera, *Dead Man Walking* (2000), came into the world. Since its premiere by the San Francisco Opera in 2000, it has been performed more than 300 times, and in February 2018, its 60th international production starring Joyce DiDonato and

---

[14] Mermelstein.
[15] Sigman.
[16] Wylie.
[17] Michelle Marie Fiertek, "A Performance Guide to "Eve-Song" by Jake Heggie" (D.M.A. diss., University of Hartford, 2013), 32, accessed October 30, 2018, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.
[18] Redman, 5.
[19] Sigman, 24.
[20] Wylie.

Michael Mayes was performed by the BBC Symphony in London.[21] Heggie admits "looking back, that five-year period when I lost the ability to play the piano was very dark and sad; however, if I hadn't gone through it, I might not have moved to San Francisco, wouldn't have gotten that job at the opera, and would certainly have never been introduced to that new world."[22] Hailed by Opera News, "U.S. opera's most successful composer,"[23] Heggie has composed 12 operas including *Dead Man Walking*, *Moby-Dick*, *Great Scott*, *Three Decembers*, and his most recent opera, *It's A Wonderful Life* (2016). Currently, he is writing *If I Were You*, which will be performed in 2019 by the Merola Opera Program.[24]

Heggie served as the first Chase Bank composer-in-residence for the San Francisco Opera with the commission for the opera in 1998-2000 and the first composer-in-residence for the Eos chamber orchestra in New York City in 2000-2002.[25] He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2005 and the Eddie Medora King Prize by the UT Austin Butler School of Music in 2016. He has been a mentor for the Washington National Opera's American Opera Initiative and has been a guest artist at universities, conservatories, and festivals throughout North America.[26]

Heggie's Song Composition

Although the main portion of his compositional works is operas, Heggie's love for voice has inspired him to keep writing songs throughout his entire career, and currently, his output includes nearly 300 songs. Heggie states how much he loves the voice and how much the genre of art song means to him:

> The voice still takes my breath away. It is the most expressive, most magical instrument ever. The inspiration comes from the voice. It brings tears to my eyes when I hear a great voice. And I love American English, too. It's a very expressive language.[27]

---

[21] Heggie, "Biography."
[22] Wylie.
[23] *Opera News*, July 2015, Cover.
[24] Heggie, "Biography."
[25] Keenan, 9.
[26] Heggie, "Biography."
[27] Tom Savage, "High Scorers: Jake Heggie," *Opera News*, January 2000, 12.

> I love songs. I'm a songwriter by heart and by nature so that's why I keep going back to it. It's the kind of texts that I'm drawn to that there seem to be recurring themes as I get older and I set more texts I realize what it is that draws me in. The song and the song cycle is a great form to explore all that stuff but it's the text that keeps drawing me back more than anything.[28]

His affection for voice has been derived from the American musicals in the 60s and 70s like *The Sound of Music*, *Godspell*, *Hair*, and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. When he heard Julie Andrews' voice in *The Sound of Music*, he was "forever drawn to and in love with the voice." Also, he was attracted by the neat and natural storytelling through music, and it inspired young Heggie to write his own texts although he had no idea of opera.[29]

The core value of vocal composition for this theatrically influenced composer is storytelling: "What I do is tell stories, whether they be songs or song cycles, a one-act, a theatrical song cycle, or an opera. It's all about telling interesting stories and using voices, music, and great words to do that. I'm very interested in exploring all aspects of storytelling. It heavily influences the things that I do today."[30] Unsurprisingly, Heggie spends much time and efforts on the text before setting it in order to fully understand those elements such as the theme, mood, nuance, situation, character, character's emotion, dramatic climax, etc. Then, he feels "suddenly a poem will just start singing to [him]."[31] This is why he loves writing for classically trained voices with a wide range of expression: "I feel I can delve even more deeply into the telling of the story."[32] The results prove this organic and natural communication between text and music. With this dramatic music, Heggie also emphasizes the importance of a performer's ability to express the story. His songs are meant to be thought as a theatrical scene sung by a character with emotion developed in the music. But he respectfully welcomes the performer's own sense of the drama to create a more

[28] Keenan, 10.
[29] Wylie.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Keenan, 13.
[32] Wylie.

powerful performance.[33] He also remarks that "The music doesn't really mean anything unless it gets a great performance, which can make or break a piece."[34]

Heggie's songs demonstrate tonal, natural, and lyrical vocal melody accompanied by rich colors with dissonances and complex tonality. Also, his music shows a strong influence from popular music like jazz, pop, folk music, and rock that he grew up with, and the influence blended in his songs generates a sense of "natural American-sounding music."[35] Sometimes, this musical trait results in bitter criticism of an outdated feeling of his music like Robert Carl's statement: "Heggie tends to write in a very recognizable tonal American idiom…Much of the music could come from anywhere in roughly 1880-1920, but with a dash of dissonance here, a touch of blues there, a little bit of polytonality at the edges."[36] However, the musical style is clearly Heggie's intention to embody American soul in his music as he remarks:

> I am definitely a melodist. I would describe myself as an American melodist who is not ashamed of the American influences I've had. My influences range from the great classics of Europe, to TV commercials and the Carol Burnett show (laughs). Overall, I hope my music sounds American and that it serves the characters in the poems well. I also want it to be something singers enjoy doing and that audiences enjoy being a part of.[37]

Heggie understands the voice so well in terms of its physiological nature. He remarks "I have learned many lessons from my dear singer friends about passaggio and other things I didn't know when I first started writing. I know that the E-natural at the top of the staff is the least favorite note for just about any singer to sit on."[38] His tuneful melodies with "an appealing sing-ability for performers"[39] have been loved by lots of top-rated singers. One of his collaborators, mezzo-soprano Jennifer Larmore mentions "his songs get right to the point – they are terrific to

---

[33] Judith Carman, "Heggie, Jake (b. 1961). "The Faces of Love. The Songs of Jake Heggie"," *Journal of Singing*, *59*, no. 2 (November 2002): 181.

[34] Savage, 13.

[35] Carman, 181.

[36] Robert Carl, "Heggie: A Lucky Child. Some Times of the Day. Facing Forward/Looking Back. Here and Gone. To say before going to Sleep. Songs and Sonnets to Ophelia. Final Monologue," *Fanfare: The Magazine for Serious Record Collectors*, *34,* no. 3 (January 2011): 309.

[37] Redman, 10.

[38] Wylie.

[39] Mermelstein.

sing," and she says "Sometimes modern song composers try too hard. Jake doesn't have to try; he's a natural."[40]

The choice of poetry is very important to him. Heggie must feel a sense of connection to the text to transform it into music. He says:

> I have enjoyed all the poets whose texts I've set. A lot of my choice of texts has to do with whether or not there is a commission involved. Sometimes the person will have a particular idea of something they would like. It has to be a poem that speaks to them, but it certainly has to speak to me as well. The only way I know if it is going to be right for me is if I feel music happening while I am reading it. The first time I read something, I immediately get a sense of whether or not it will work for me.[41]

Heggie's song repertoire covers a wide range of poets. He likes to set great poets from the previous era including Emily Dickinson, Vachel Lindsay, A.E. Housman, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Edna St. Vincent Millay as well as the contemporaries such as Maya Angelou, Sister Helen Prejean, his librettists – Terrence Mc Nally and Gene Scheer, and his favorite singer, Frederica von Stade. He sets mostly American poetry, but he also occasionally sets English, German, and French poetry.[42] Heggie has worked with Gene Scheer closely for his operas and songs. Scheer has been a librettist for most of Heggie's recent operas including *If I Were You* (2019), *It's A Wonderful Life* (2016), *Out of Darkness: Two Remain* (2016 rev. 2018), *The Radio Hour* (2014), *Another Sunrise* (2012), *Moby-Dick* (2010), *Three Decembers* (2008), and *To Hell and Back* (2006). Heggie and Scheer also have explored the genre of art song together. Scheer has written new texts, and they have created songs with interesting subjects and themes. Their songs include Iconic Legacies: *First Ladies at the Smithsonian* (2015), *Camille Claudel: Into The Fire* (2012), *Pieces of 9/11: Memories from Houston* (2011), *Friendly Persuasions: Songs in Homage to Poulenc* (2008), and so on.

Heggie has felt a strong and long connection to Emily Dickinson. Heggie has set Emily Dickinson in songs and choral pieces throughout the whole span of his career. Dickinson was one of the first poets he set. His first exposure to Dickinson came via his private composition teacher,

---

[40] Ibid.
[41] Redman, 15.
[42] Mermelstein.

Ernst Bacon, when Heggie was a high school student: "He introduced me to the poems of Emily Dickinson and the joys of setting text. That's where it all started for me, really."[43] Bacon himself wrote over 50 vivid songs to Dickinson's texts, and many of these were recorded by his wife, Helen Boatwright, soprano. Heggie's song, "If you were coming in the Fall," won the 1995 G. Schirmer American Art Song Competition and became one of the five settings of Dickinson that Heggie titled as "The Faces of Love," which also represents the name of three volumes of his early song collections, "The Faces of Love" (1999), and the recording, "The Faces of Love – The Songs of Jake Heggie." His affection for Emily Dickinson will never end for he admires her so much: "Dickinson is still one of the most astonishing of contemporary poets. With just a few words she can describe feelings and journeys that take other thousands of words to investigate. She never stops inspiring and surprising me."[44] Heggie has set about 30 poems by Dickinson including his recent song, "These Strangers, in a foreign World" from *These Strangers* (2018).

Newer Every Day (2014)

Newer Every Day, for Soprano and Piano, Songs for Kiri[45]

1. Silence
2. I'm Nobody! Who are you?
3. Fame
4. That I did always love
5. Goodnight

Newer Every Day was commissioned by Welz Kauffman and the Ravinia Festival for Dame Kiri Te Kanawa's 70th Birthday and premiered on Aug 12, 2014, at the Ravinia Festival's

[43] Ibid.

[44] Shannon Melody Unger, "The Starry Night: Jake Heggie, Vincent Van Gogh, and the Consolation of the Stars" (D.M.A. diss., The University of Memphis, 2011), 99, accessed December 3, 2018, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

[45] Jake Heggie, *Newer Every Day: For Soprano and Piano* (San Francisco: Bent Pen Music, Inc., 2014).

Martin Theater, Highland Park, IL, by Kiri Te Kanawa, soprano and Jake Heggie, piano. The connection between Kiri Te Kanawa and Jake Heggie was developed by Von Stade who suggested that Te Kanawa include his songs on her recital at Ravinia in 2012. Subsequently, Te Kanawa asked Heggie to write songs for her with texts by Emily Dickinson.[46] That is how this piece was created. The score was published by Bent Pen Music, INC. in 2014, and a version for voice and orchestra is also available. The recording includes *Love Life* performed by Ann Moss, soprano and Heggie, piano, released by Angels Share. The voice and orchestra version can be heard in *A Certain Slant of Light* (Pentatone) performed by soprano Lisa Delan and the Philharmonique de Marseille conducted by Lawrence Foster.

Heggie takes the title, "Newer Every day" from Dickinson's verse of her letter, "We turn not older with the years, but newer every day." He remarks the poems show "Where I am as a composer and where Kiri is as a singer right now." "It was fun picking out poems I thought would resonate with her and I was very happy they did," he says.[47] The cycle includes contrasting texts, moods, themes, and musical effects that create a great dramatic flow throughout.

1. Silence

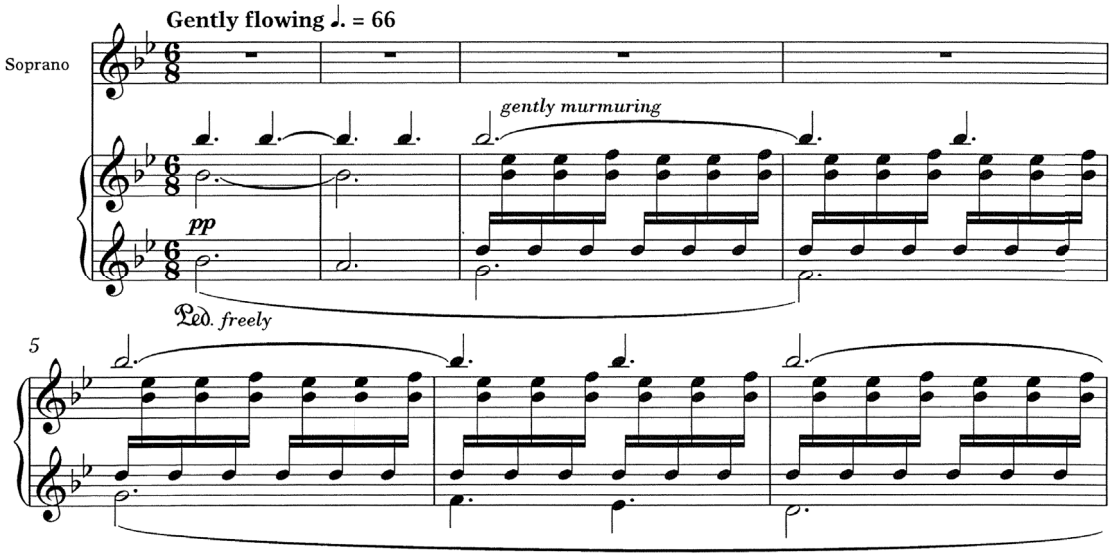
> Silence is all we dread.
> There's Ransom in a Voice –
> But Silence is Infinity
> Himself have not a face.
>
> (J1251/ F1300)[48]

The poem tells that we all dread for silence, so we wish to get rid of it by "a Voice." However, silence is infinite and undefinable. This brief text shows how Emily Dickinson expresses the profound meaning with simple words. In this poem, "silence" refers to God whom

[46] John Von Rhein, "A diva in the twilight of her career inspires new song cycle, at Ravinia," Chicago Tribune, August 5, 2014, Tuesday.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 868.

we would like to know but whom we cannot understand and define fully. Also, “silence” may imply our unexpectable life.

Heggie expresses the images of Dickinson’s simple but profound words through musical effects. First of all, Heggie highlights the image of “Infinity” by a variety of musical tools. The sound resembles the image of the universe which is quiet but complex, still, and undefinable. The beginning octaves of B♭ gives the sense of open space. The opening B♭ obscures the tonality at the beginning, but the bass melody settles the song in G minor in m. 3. Then the octaves become outer voices, and the murmuring figure of sixteenth notes begins to fill the space as inner voices.

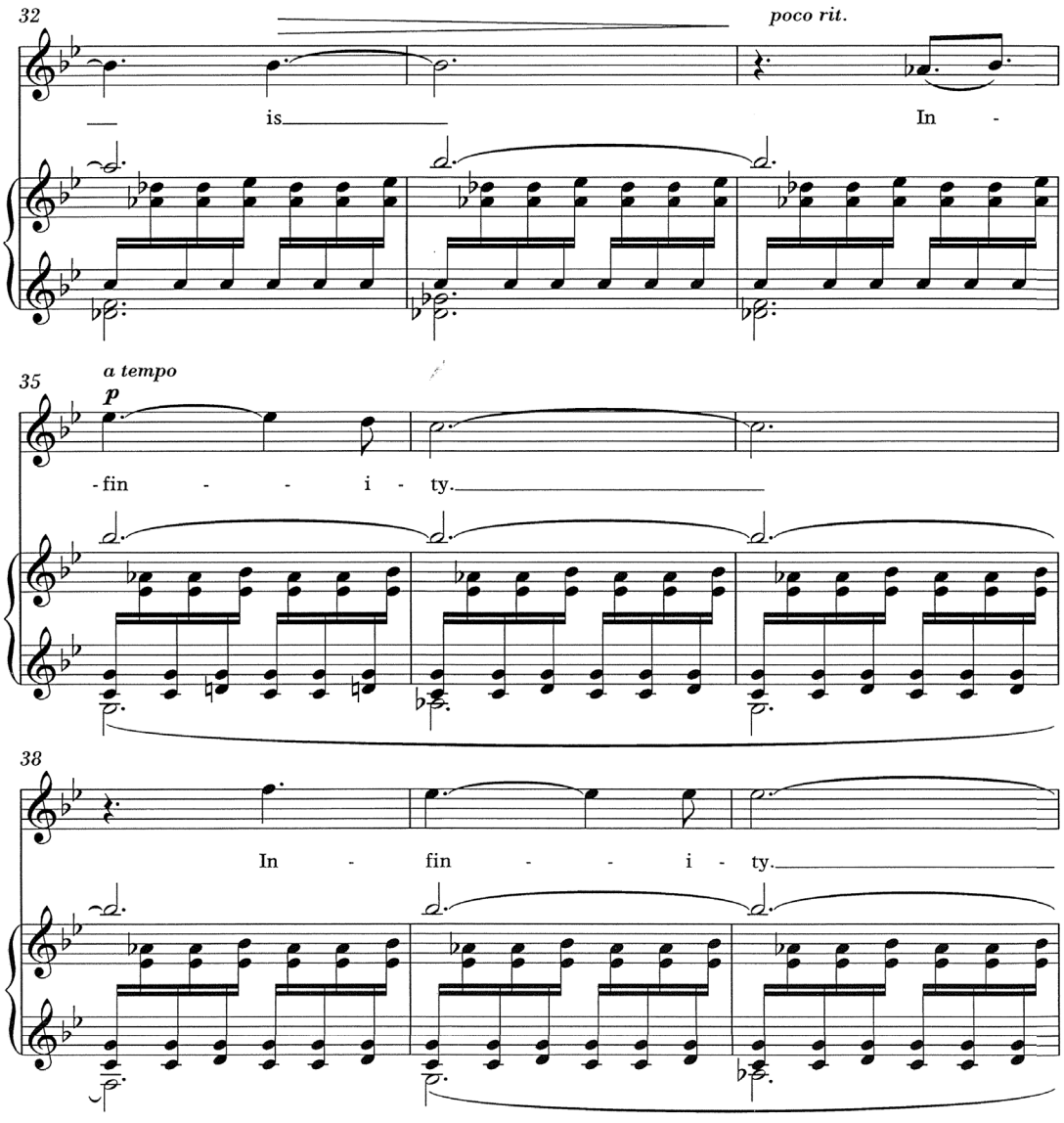


Example 3.1. Heggie, “Silence,” mm. 1-7.

The listeners can readily catch the image of “Infinity” through this consistent murmuring figure continuing for most of the time. The tone of this figure sounds vague and murky with the use of dissonance. But the outer voices, especially the bass, move with sustained long notes, and they outline the tonal progression. The tonal ambiguity returns at the final chord, and the song ends without a resolution to describe the sense of continuity. Moreover, Heggie indicates the accompaniment to stay gentle and soft without a strong dramatic motion. He puts ***pp*** in the piano part with a direction, “gently flowing” at the beginning, and there is no further dynamic marking

in the accompaniment. While the vocal phrase contains many dynamic instructions, the accompaniment should describe the infinite and continuous feeling with one dynamic level.

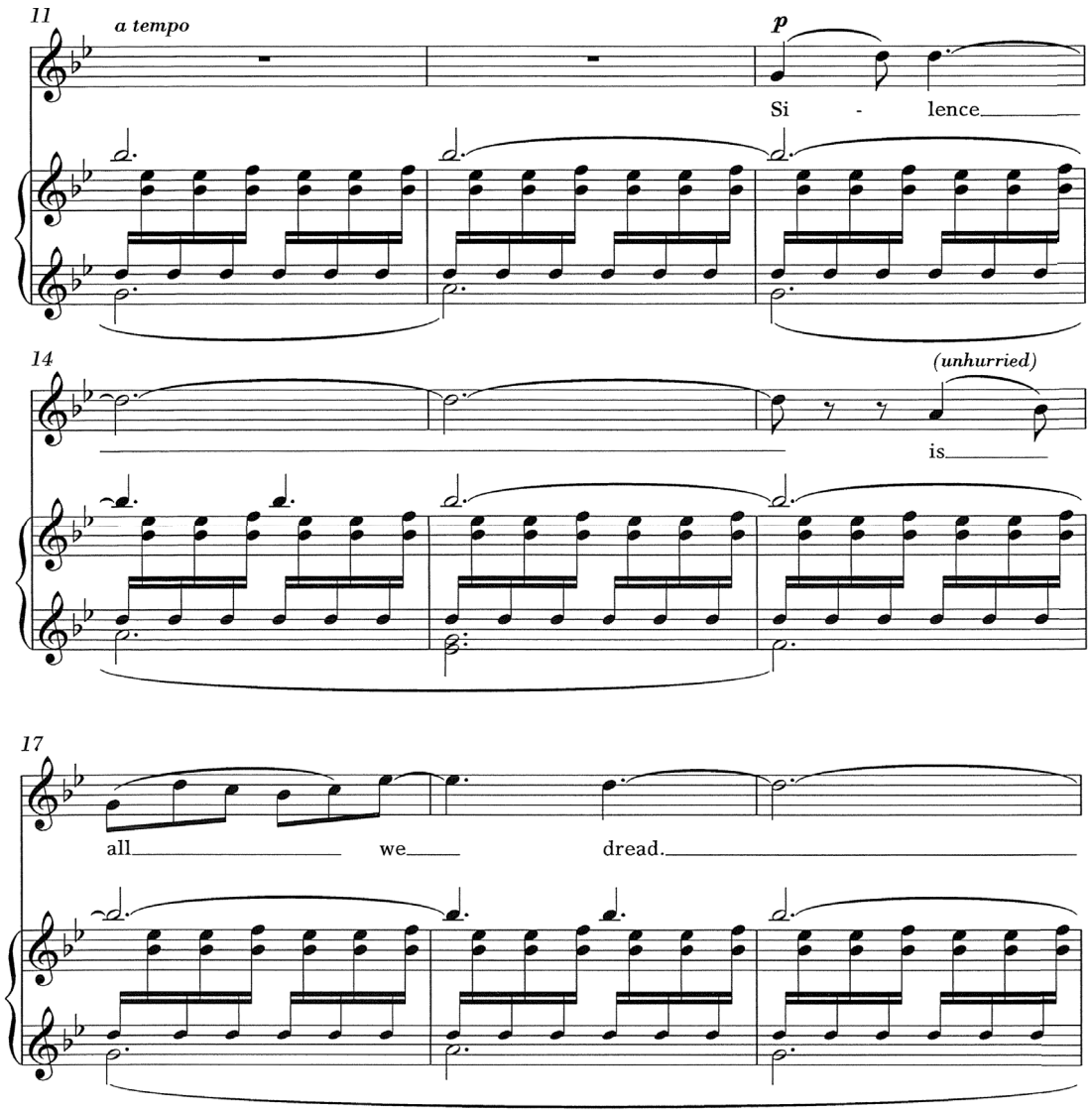
Heggie immediately reacts to the word, “Infinity,” when it appears in the text. He repeats the word unlike the original poem. Also, the texture becomes slightly richer by the left hand and inner voices taking the lower range in m. 35.



Example 3.2. Heggie, “Silence,” mm. 32-40.

The composer uses contrasting musical ideas to illustrate the semantic contrast between “Silence” and “Voice” in the text. The song begins with “Silence” keeping soft and gentle with ***p***.

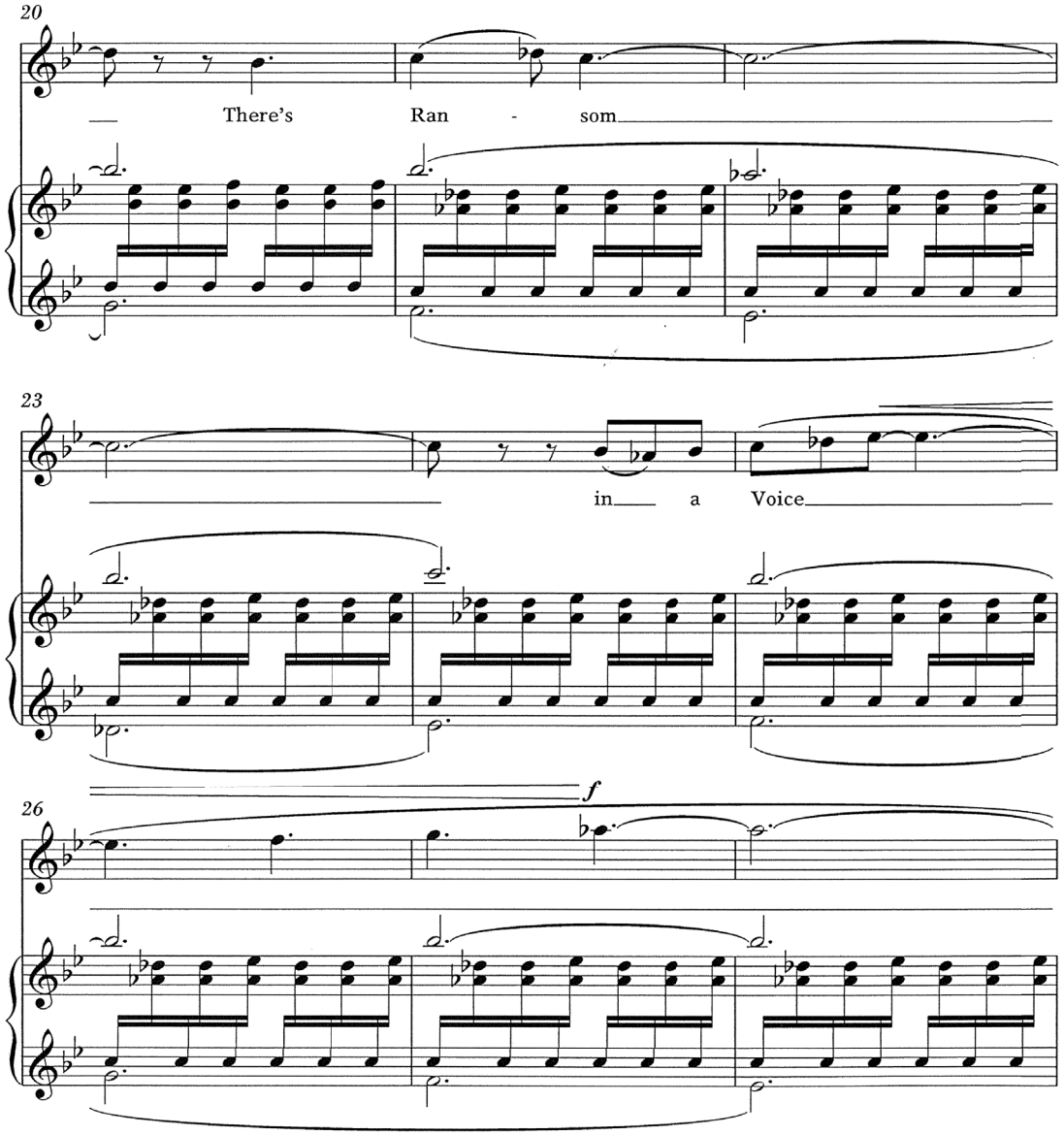
The successive eighth notes on “all we dread” in m. 17 move relatively quickly. It pictures a dreadful feeling, and this rhythmic motive foreshadows “In a Voice” in mm. 24-25 which intends to break the stillness (see Example 3.3 and 3.4).



Example 3.3. Heggie, “Silence,” mm. 11-19.

The second verse, “There’s Ransom in a Voice –,” illustrates a very different musical direction. In m. 21, Dickinson uses an interesting word choice, “Ransom.” Heggie catches it with a big sonorous change. The accompaniment adds A♭ and D♭, and the right-hand top note, B♭, firstly moves. When “a Voice” appears in m. 25, the voice begins to grow dynamically through

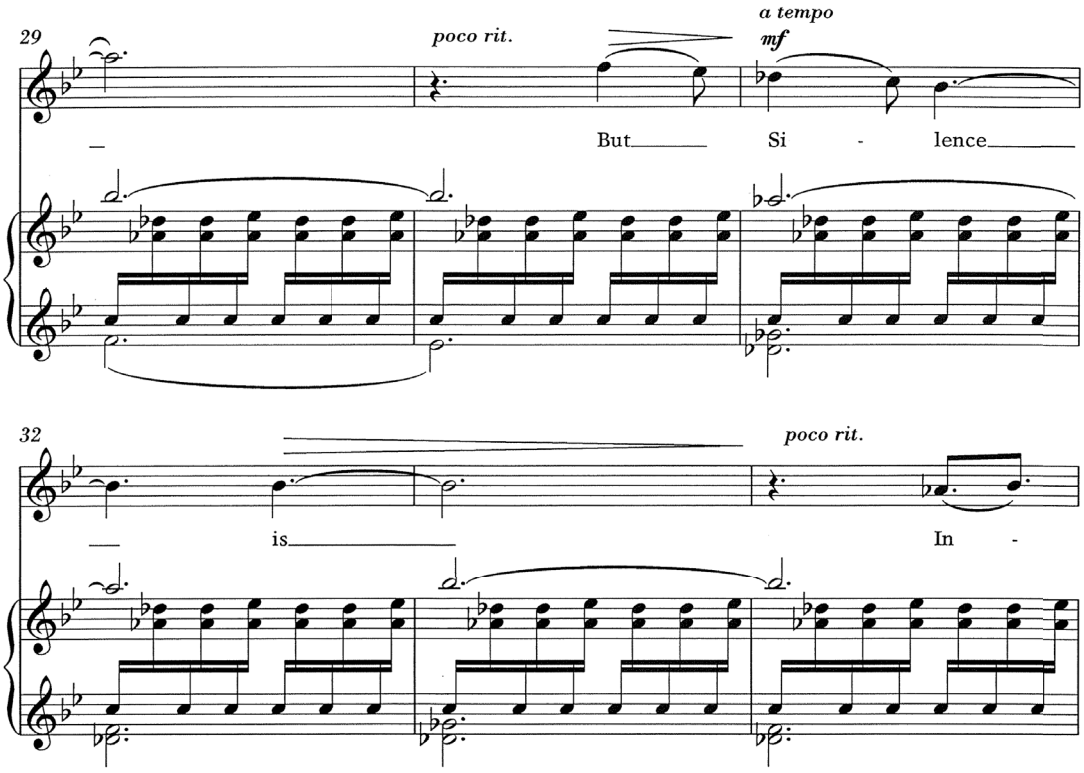
crescendo from ***p*** to ***f***. Moreover, the vocal melody expands into a long stepwise ascending phrase moving to the highest note, A♭, which is distant from the tonic key of G minor. The word, "Voice," carries on an expansive melody, while Heggie uses long sustained notes in the majority of the vocal phrases, which tend to center on a limited tessitura, from B♭ to E♭.



Example 3.4. Heggie, "Silence," mm. 20-28.

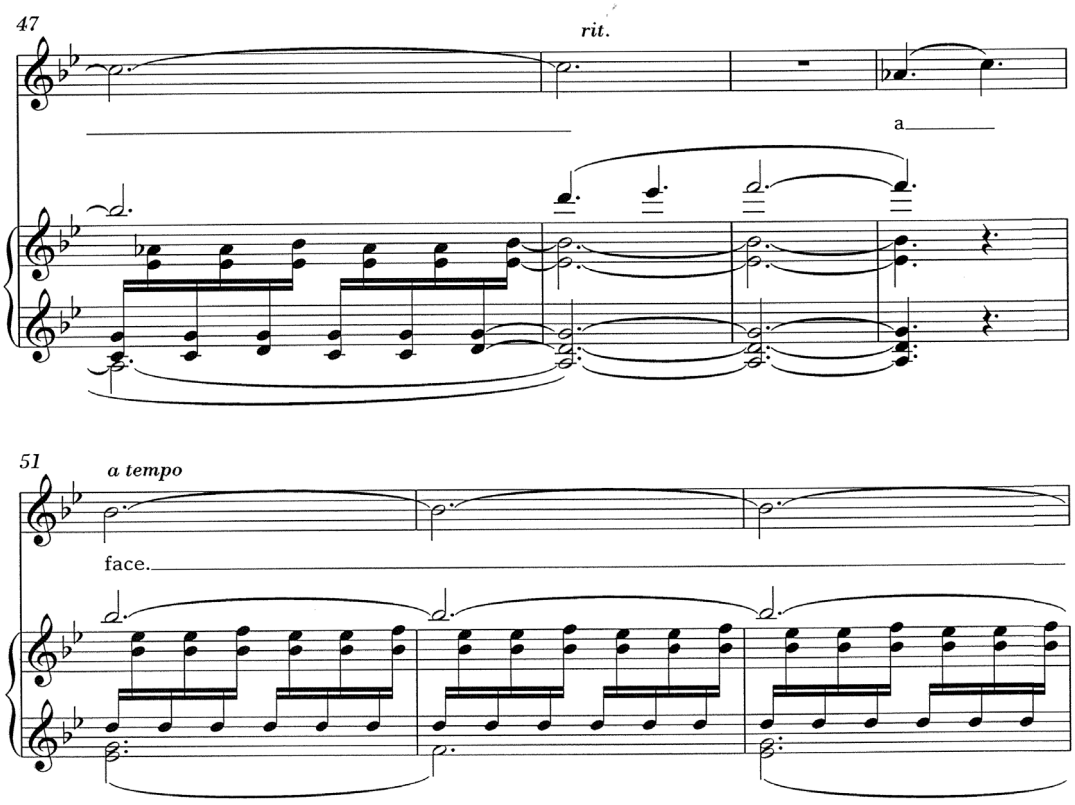
When the text returns to "Silence," music becomes silent again. The vocal contour descends on mm. 30-31, and the strong dynamic gradually becomes ***p*** on m. 35 through the decrescendo

markings (see Example 3.2). The musical contrasts in vocal range, dynamics, and harmony strongly deliver the meaning and mood of these two contrasting words.



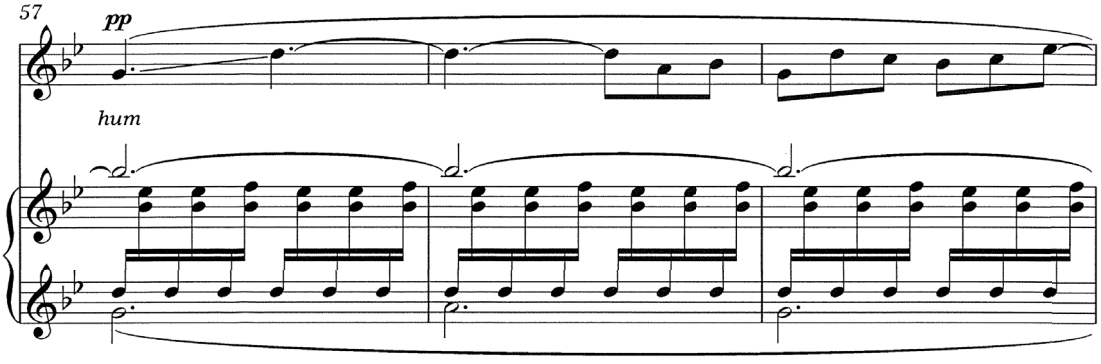
Example 3.5. Heggie, "Silence," mm. 29-34.

True stillness in the music provides a significant moment in m. 48. Heggie breaks the verse between "Not" and "a Face." The murmuring figure stops for the first time, and the right hand, which has mostly stayed on B♭, plays three ascending high notes. This moment draws attention to those words and emphasizes the characteristics of undefinable "Silence."



Example 3.6. Heggie, "Silence," mm. 47-53.

The murmuring figure comes back soon in m. 51 and plays until the end. The infinite silence continues along with the opening vocal melody. But simultaneously, the humming voice is a timid but resistant attempt to fill the silence.



Example 3.7. Heggie, "Silence," mm. 57-59.

2. I'm Nobody

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you – Nobody – Too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Don't tell! They'd advertise – you know!

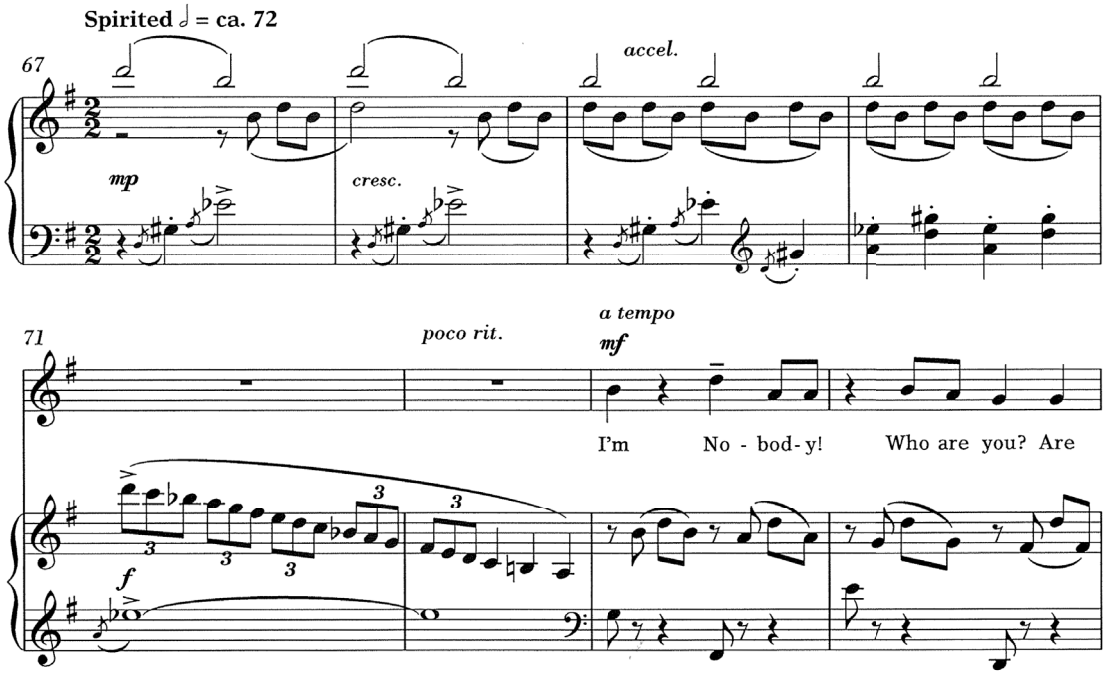
How dreary – to be – Somebody!
How public – like a Frog –
To tell one's name – the livelong June –
To an admiring Bog!

(J288/ F260)[49]

"I'm Nobody" shows Dickinson's inclination of her reclusive life. The first stanza and second stanza show contrast between "Nobody" and "Somebody." The text praises being anonymous. The speaker prefers to be "Nobody" to keep privacy, and she refuses to be "Somebody" who is always busy showing off like "a Frog" croaking noisily in a swamp in June.

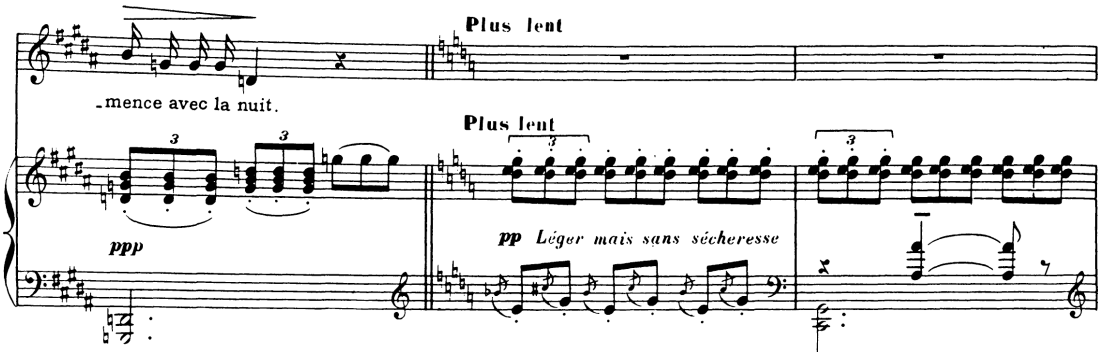
The mood changes drastically from the first song. The tone of the poem is not only jaunty but also sarcastic. Heggie expresses Dickinson's wry wit and a sense of humor through musical figures introduced in the prelude: the tritone with acciaccatura in the bass, repetition of b-d-b-d, and descending triplets in the right hand.

[49] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 206-7.



Example 3.8. Heggie, "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" mm. 67-74.

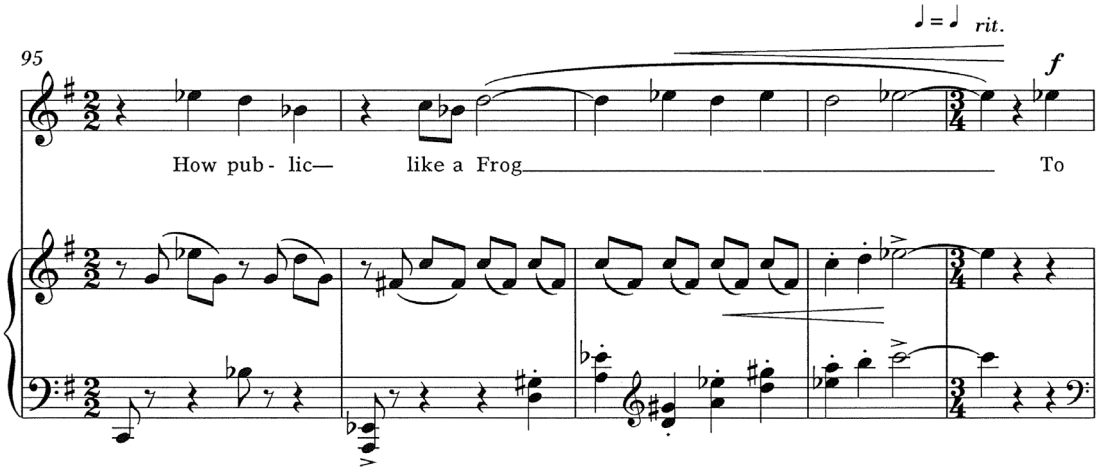
The embellished tritones in the prelude in mm. 67-69 describe the croaking of a frog. Heggie's use of the grace notes to mimic the croaking frog is reminiscent of Claude Debussy's croaking frogs near the end of "La flûte de Pan," the first song in *Trois Chansons de Bilitis*.



Example 3.9. Debussy, "La flûte de Pan," mm. 21-23.

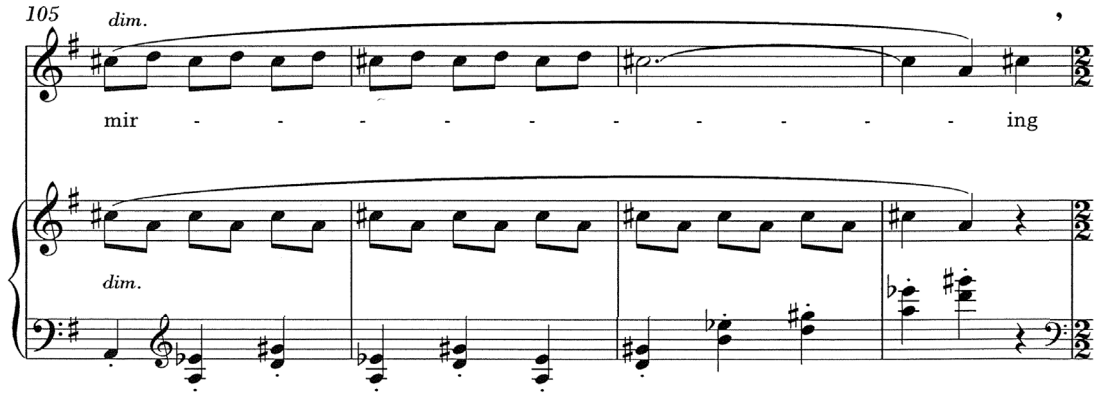
Heggie uses the word painting of the tritones in mm. 96-98, where the text directly states "Frog." The three different tritones of F♯-C, A-E♭, and D-G♯ in the accompaniment enhance the musical onomatopoeia of noisy frogs. This tritone motive recurs over the song with words about

"Somebody": "they'd advertise" in m. 86 and "admiring" in mm. 104-108 (see Example 3.13 and 3.11).



Example 3.10. Heggie, "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" mm. 95-99.

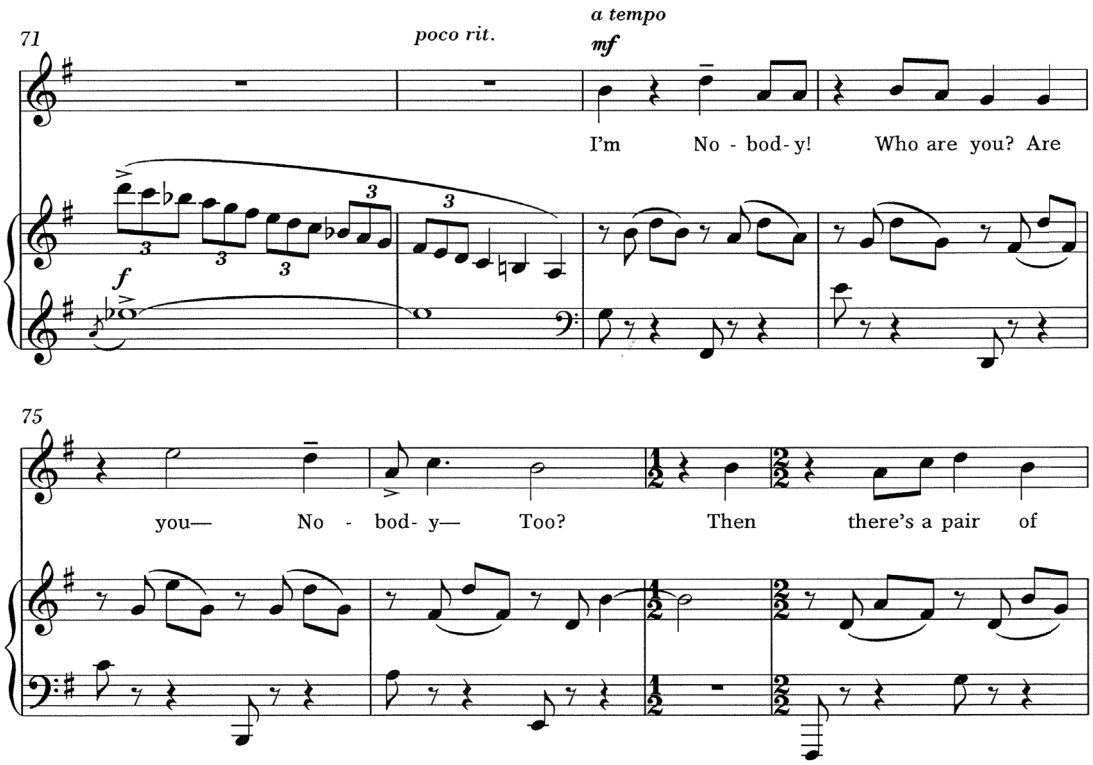
Along with the "Frog" motive, the b-d-b-d figure in the prelude varies and generates a funny sound on the words, "Frog" and "admiring." The repetition of the tritone of F♯-C in the right hand in mm. 96-97 is the first variation. Then, in mm. 105-108, the right hand plays repetitive C♯-A while the vocal melody sings minor seconds C♯-D. The contrary motion of these two phrases with a series of tritones generates a mocking sound.



Example 3.11. Heggie, "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" mm. 105-108.

Heggie provides musical contrasts as the text describes the contrast between "Nobody" and "Somebody." The first statement telling about being 'nobody' sounds natural, raw, and

intrinsic. The vocal unit is short and brief with rests in the middle of the verses. Heggie uses the unstructured rhythm and syllabic text setting to imitate speech pattern in the vocal phrase.

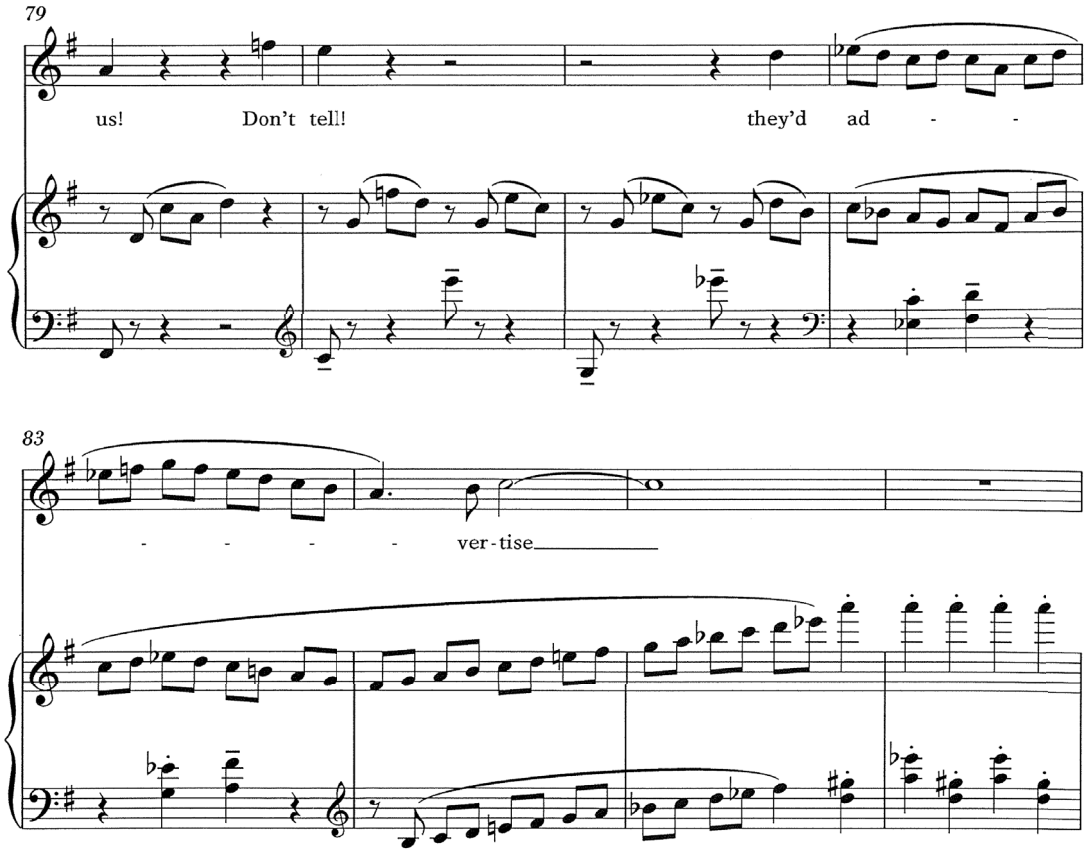


Example 3.12. Heggie, "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" mm. 71-78.

The rest also visualizes the writing style of Emily Dickinson, who intentionally uses dashes to interrupt the flow of verses. Although the rests in the song do not exactly follow Dickinson's dashes, they break the flow and provide the sense of humor. Moreover, the composer inserts a big pause of the whole measure between two contrasting stanzas to give a thinking moment. Performers can creatively take advantage of this *tacet* as their theatrical expression.

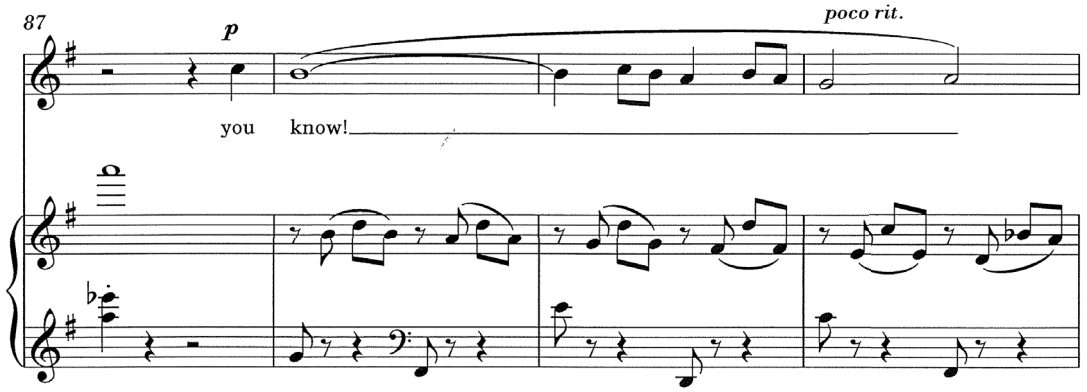
On the contrary, for the words like "advertise," "Frog," and "admiring," the composer utilizes extensive melismatic phrases, which are comparatively artificial and structural. They are clearly the singing voices of "Somebody," who always shows off his identity in public: See mm. 82-83 where the piano line echoes the voice 3rd lower. The ascending parallel 3rd reminds us of the humorous descending triplet figure in the prelude. The contrasting humorous part with

tritones in the left hand and high A with staccatos in mm. 86-87 discloses the speaker's sarcastic attitude. The melismatic phrase is not beautiful anymore but boring (see Example 3.10 and 3.11).



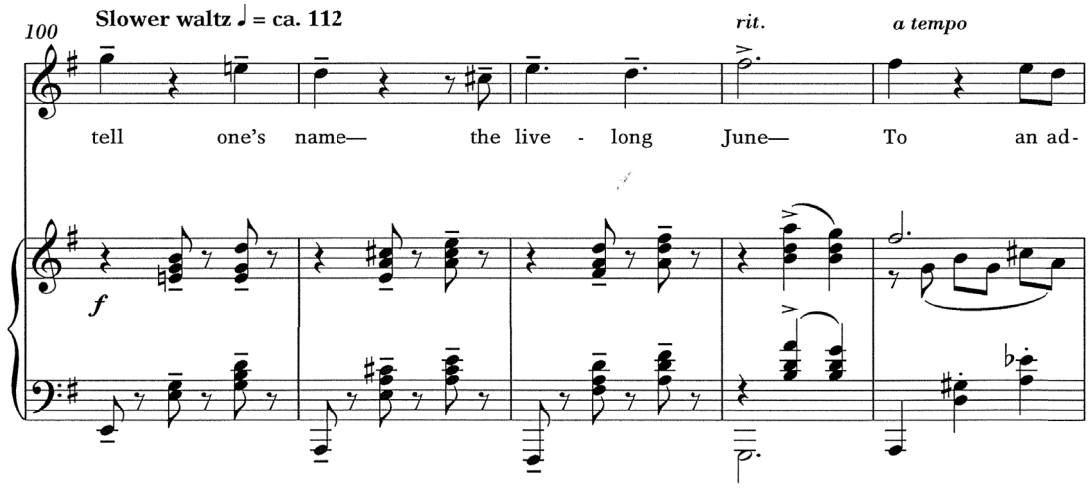
Example 3.13. Heggie, "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" mm. 79-86.

Then, the following phrase "you know" in mm. 88-90 gives another mocking moment by imitating the melisma with a soft voice.



Example 3.14. Heggie, "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" mm. 87-90.

Abruptly, Heggie inserts a waltz section in mm. 100-103 which is the biggest musical contrast in the entire song. The structured rhythm of the waltz breaks the natural feeling of the speech-like phraseology. The dynamic is ***f***, and the accompaniment plays loud stomping chords. Moreover, he indicates the tenuto or accent on each note both in the voice and piano. This waltz section depicts the loudly crying frogs which "tell one's name" in the summertime.

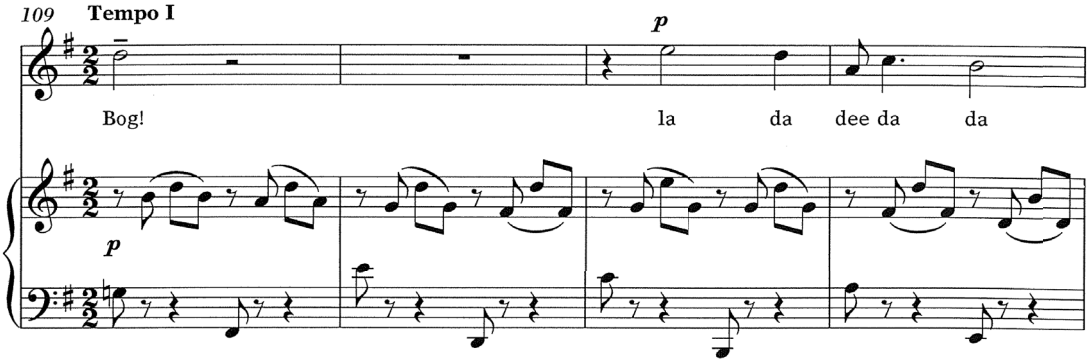


Example 3.15. Heggie, "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" mm. 100-104.

Harmonically, the tonality of the song at the beginning is ambiguous with accidental notes and tritones. But the tonality of G major becomes clear as soon as the vocal line enters and states "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" When she says, "they'd advertise," E♭ returns and sidetracks the G major mode temporarily. When the second stanza enters in m. 92, the tonality changes to its parallel minor key, G minor, as the speaker bluntly reveals her emotion, "How dreary to be Somebody!" The harmony returns to a major mode in m. 100, but Heggie blurs the key of G major until m. 109 throughout the circle of fifths and tritones in mm. 100-108 as the text expresses noisy frogs (see Example 3.15 and 3.11). To summarize, through the harmonic language, Heggie expresses "Nobody" very clearly and naturally while he describes "Somebody" ambiguously.

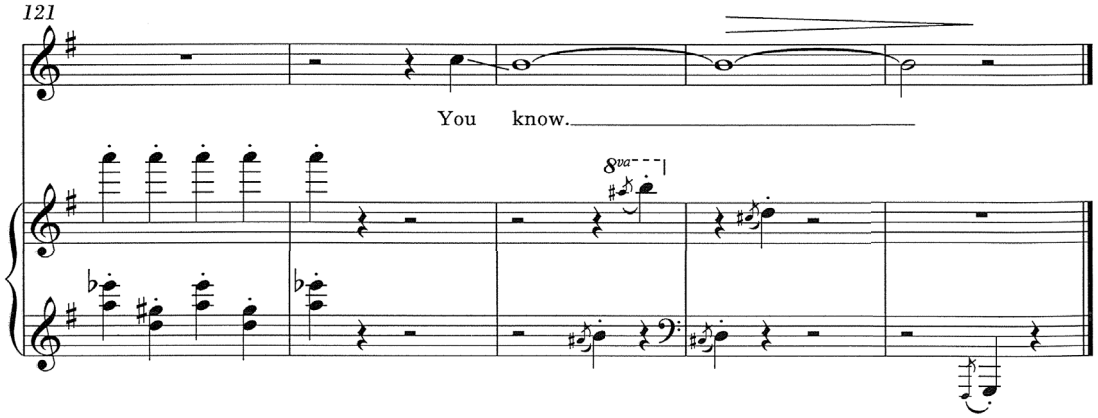
Like the first song, "Silence," the first statement of the song repeats at the end: scat singing plus "You know." Unlike humming in the first song, scat singing keeps the mood bright

and fun. The nonsense syllables, added by the composer, may deliver a mocking sound and imply the speaker's desire to remain anonymous.



Example 3.16. Heggie, "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" mm. 109-112.

The last statement, "You know," reminds us of the speaker's wry humor with the piano playing grace notes from the "frog" motive.



Example 3.17. Heggie, "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" mm. 121-125.

3. Fame

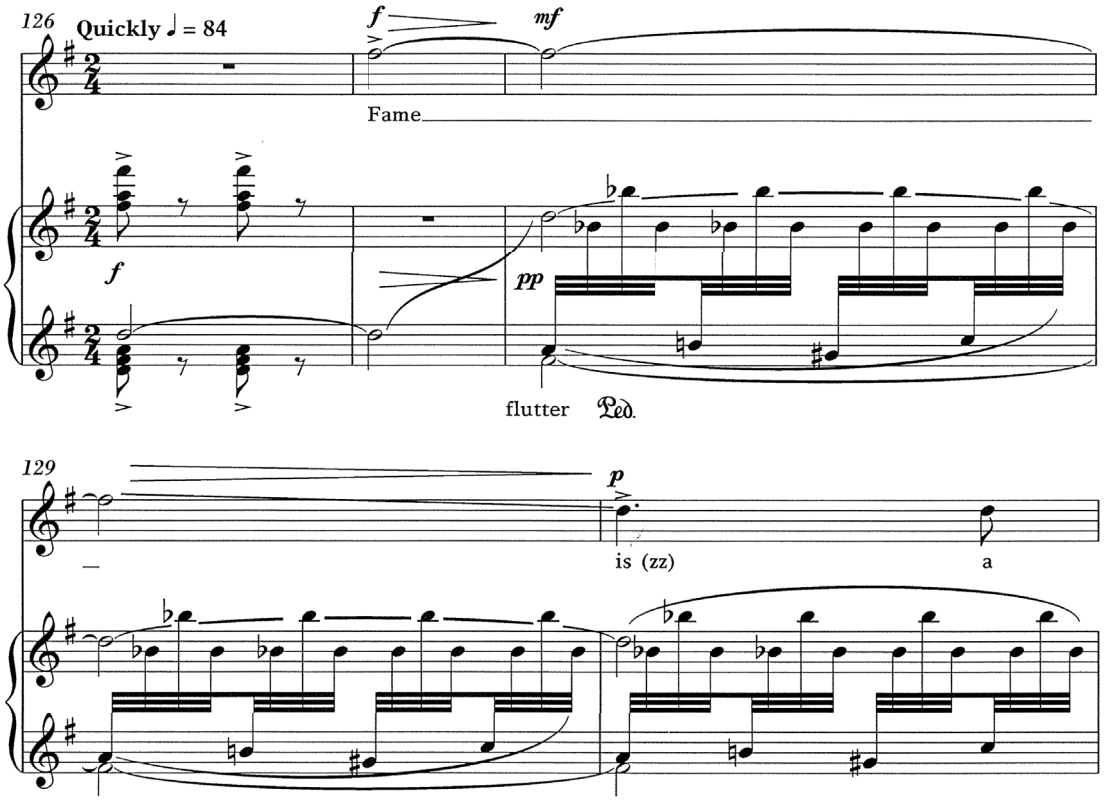
Fame is a bee.
It has a song –
It has a sting –
Ah, too, it has a wing.

(J1763/ F1788)[50]

[50] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 1182.

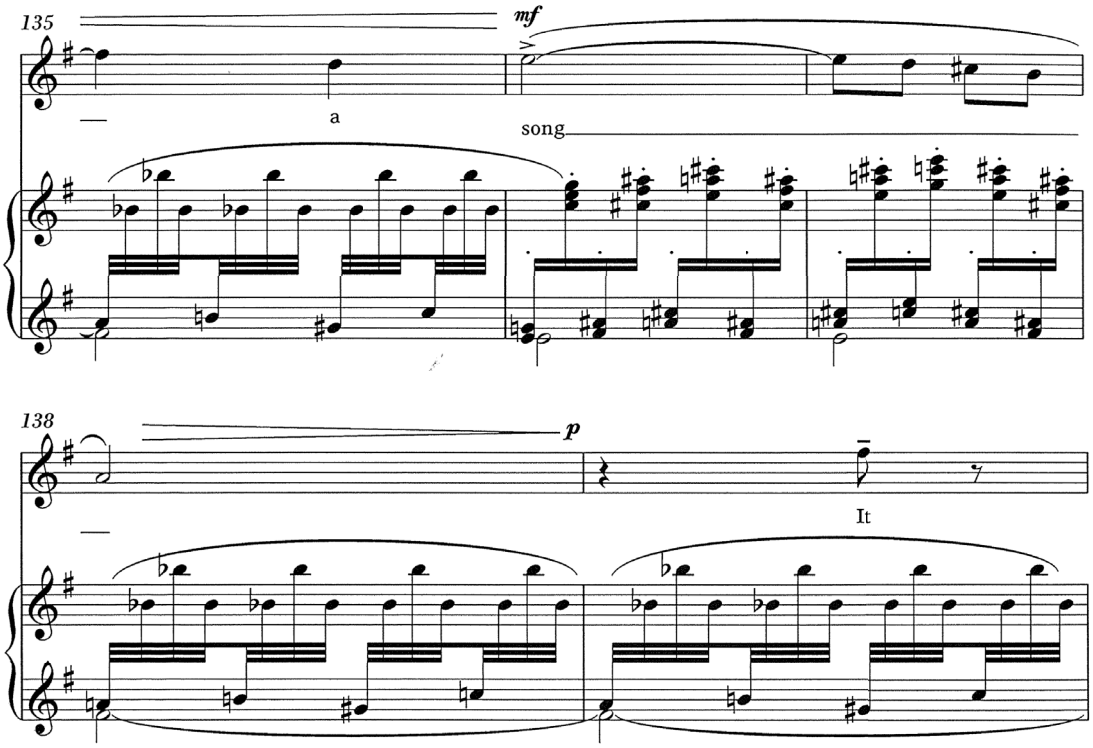
Ironically, the third song tells about “Fame,” which contrasts with the theme of the second song, “I’m Nobody.” The text simply describes “a bee” which is famous for its “song,” “sting,” and “wing.” This short one-minute piece contains full of Heggie’s brilliant techniques of text expression.

The use of word painting visualizes the words vividly. The words, “a bee,” “song,” “sting,” and “wing,” have different musical figures throughout the song. Firstly, the composer indicates “(zz)” in m. 130 on “is (zz)” to make an onomatopoeic buzzing sound of “a bee.” This indication recurs on “has (zz)” in mm. 134, 140, and 154. Besides the buzzing sound, the voice may indicate the sound of the bee’s flying through the dynamics. The song begins with a strong announcement of “Fame” on the high note with ***f***. Throughout the song, most of the words occur on long notes with crescendo or decrescendo marks. This dynamic effect indicates the bee hovering through the air as a person would hear the buzzing sound either loudly or softly according to the distance.



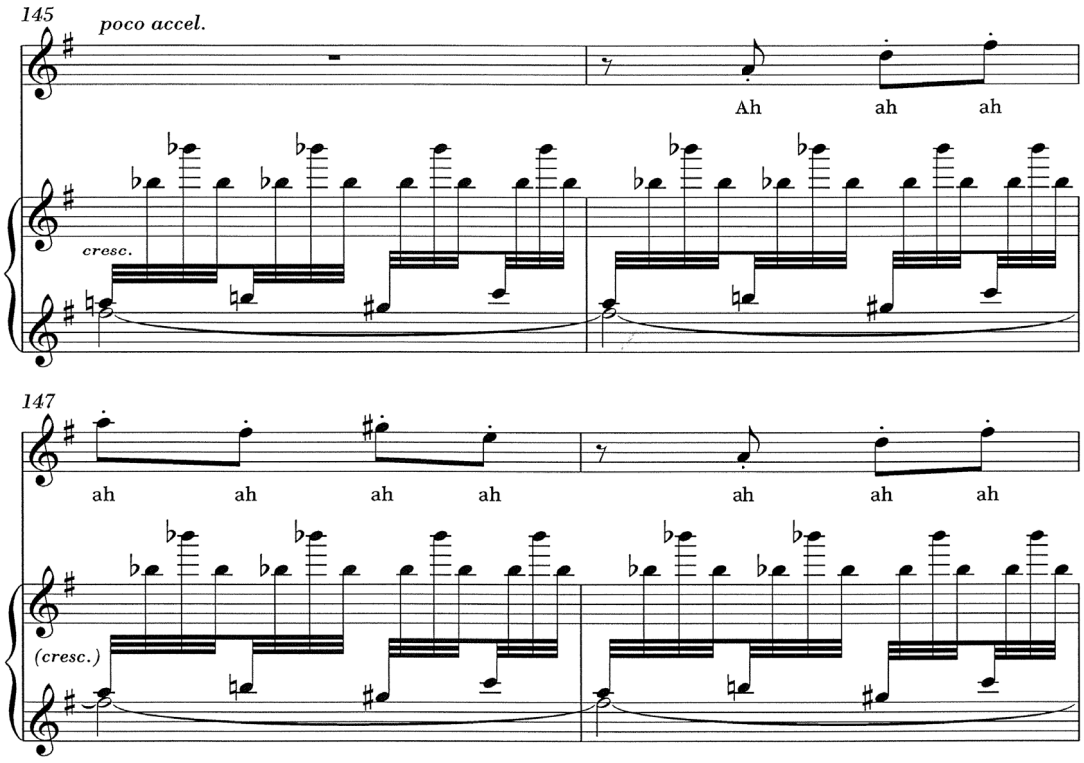
Example 3.18. Heggie, “Fame,” mm. 126-130.

The figure of long notes breaks in m. 136 where the text brings “song.” The vocal line descends stepwise with legato. This descending scale of fifth from E to A in mm. 136-138 is more song-like than the long-sustained notes.



Example 3.19. Heggie, “Fame,” mm. 135-139.

Another song-like melody appears in mm. 146-149 but with different melodic characteristics. Heggie repeats “Ah” in a happy mood through leaps and staccatos like a little girl hopping around the garden.



Example 3.20. Heggie, "Fame," mm. 145-148.

The "sting" and "wing" are described by the accompaniment. The introduction of the song calls for the D major chord to be played strongly (see Example 3.18). The listeners can realize that this piercing sound depicts the sting of a bee when it reappears at the end right after the word, "sting," in the vocal line. On the contrary, the piano part plays the busy movement of "wing" with thirty-second notes and sixteenth notes. The score also indicates 'flutter' in m. 128. These busy figures of thirty-second notes and sixteenth notes in different ranges and octaves throughout the song describe buzzing wings and variations of the flight patterns (see Example 3.18).

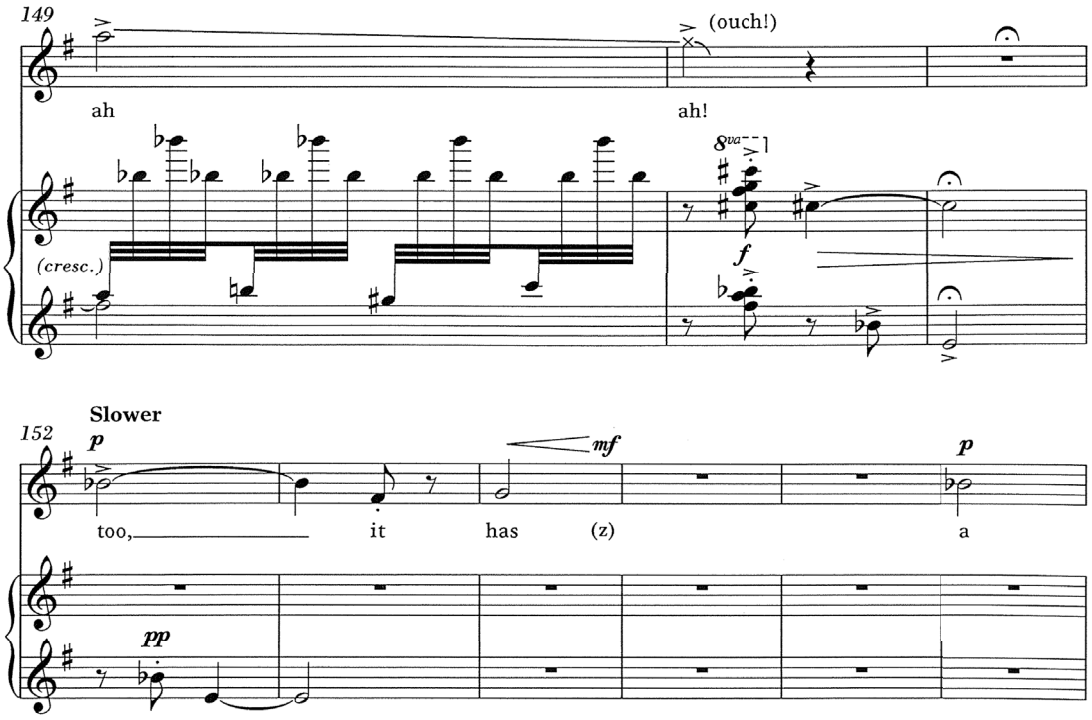
In the song, the places of "sting" and "wing" are switched, unlike the original text. According to an interview, Heggie states that it was not his intention, and he realized that it happened when he had a coaching with Kiri Te Kanawa.[51] But relocation of "sting" at the end

[51] Robert K. Wallace, "The Deepest Dickinson," *Dickinson and Moby-Dick in 2015* (blog), November 23, 2014, accessed April 24, 2018, https://dickinsonandmobydick.wordpress.com/2014/11/23/the-deepest-dickinson.

reveals Heggie's brilliant compositional instinct. It makes more musical sense because the motive of "sting" in the beginning also closes the song as a frame (see Example 3.22).

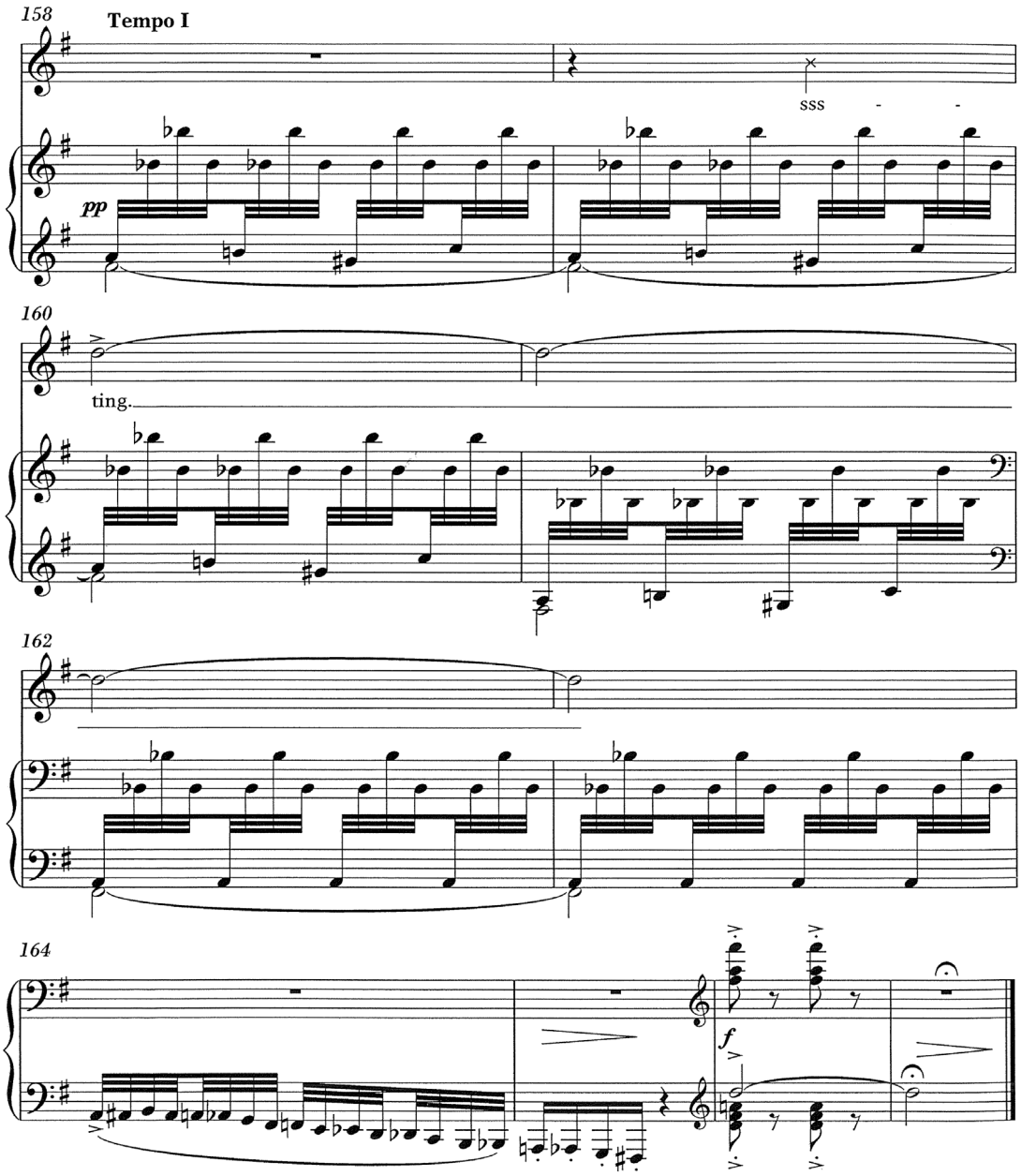
The text painting is strong and obvious, but the tonality is complex. The key signature is G major. However, the song is framed by D major chords, and the vocal melody is centered on D rather than G. Also, the outer voices of the accompaniment often suggest D major area, while the inner voices show an extremely vague tonality. The tonal ambiguity also illustrates the bee's movement which is unpredictable.

Heggie dramatizes the descriptive text by adding his imagination of a human character. In m. 150, he inserted "(ouch!)" which is a physical voice of the speaker, or a little girl, who does not directly appear in the original text. Then, the songful phrase with "Ah ah ah ..." in mm. 146-149 can be understood as a song of the girl. Heggie brings the happy girl into the text and creates an exciting theatrical scene. This happy little girl is stung by a bee. The busy movement of wings in the accompaniment stops when she screams in m. 150. Also, the piano part plays a striking chord consisting of a tritone in the highest register of the song. The following tritones, B♭-E, in mm. 150-152 describe the pain of the sting. The rests between each word in the text, "it has a sting," maybe imitate the voice of the crying girl who cannot speak on because of the pain. In addition, Heggie, with the use of the triple 'sss,' which lasts a full quarter note, illustrates the further discomfort of the girl in m. 159 (see Example 3.22).



Example 3.21. Heggie, "Fame," mm. 149-157.

Heggie keeps the high register to illustrate the sound of a little bee throughout the song, but the low register portrays the bee falling down near the end. In m. 161, the accompaniment starts to move into the low register, and in m. 162, the bass clef appears for the first time. Moreover, the new gesture, final chromatic descending phrase in mm. 164-165, implies the death of the bee after stinging the girl.



Example 3.22. Heggie, "Fame," mm. 158-167.

4. That I did always love

That I did always love
I bring thee Proof
That till I loved
I never lived – Enough –

That I shall love alway –
I argue thee
That love is life –
And life hath Immortality –

This – dost thou doubt – Sweet –
Then have I
Nothing to show
But Calvary –

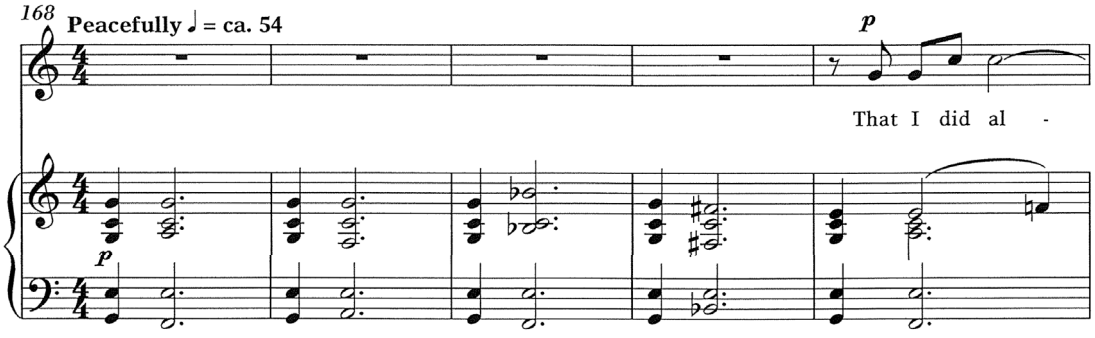
(J549/ F652)[52]

The mood of the song, "That I did always love," is completely different. This song is in the calmest mood among the songs in the whole cycle. The tempo is slow with ***p***, the score indicates to play "peacefully," and the simple chordal accompaniment sounds tranquil. In this poem "That I did always love," the speaker declares her love for the beloved. For her, love is the meaning of life, and life is in vain without love. But with love, life becomes eternal. If the beloved doubts her love for him, she would have nothing to show but pain. Love in this text emphasizes its pure and transcendent value.

Heggie describes the purity of love by establishing the key of C major, which is often used to express innocence and purity. The tonality is firm in C major at the beginning and at the end, but the harmonic progression is complex, as the text delivers a simple but profound meaning. The prelude begins with the open position of a tonic chord but weakly in second inversion. The four-measure prelude largely stays on a tonic chord. However, this tonic chord is repeatedly distracted by dissonances: F and A over the C major triad in mm. 168-169, F and B♭ in m. 170, and F♯ and B♭ in m. 171. Also, F♯ and B♭ produce tritones along with C and E. The prelude in a

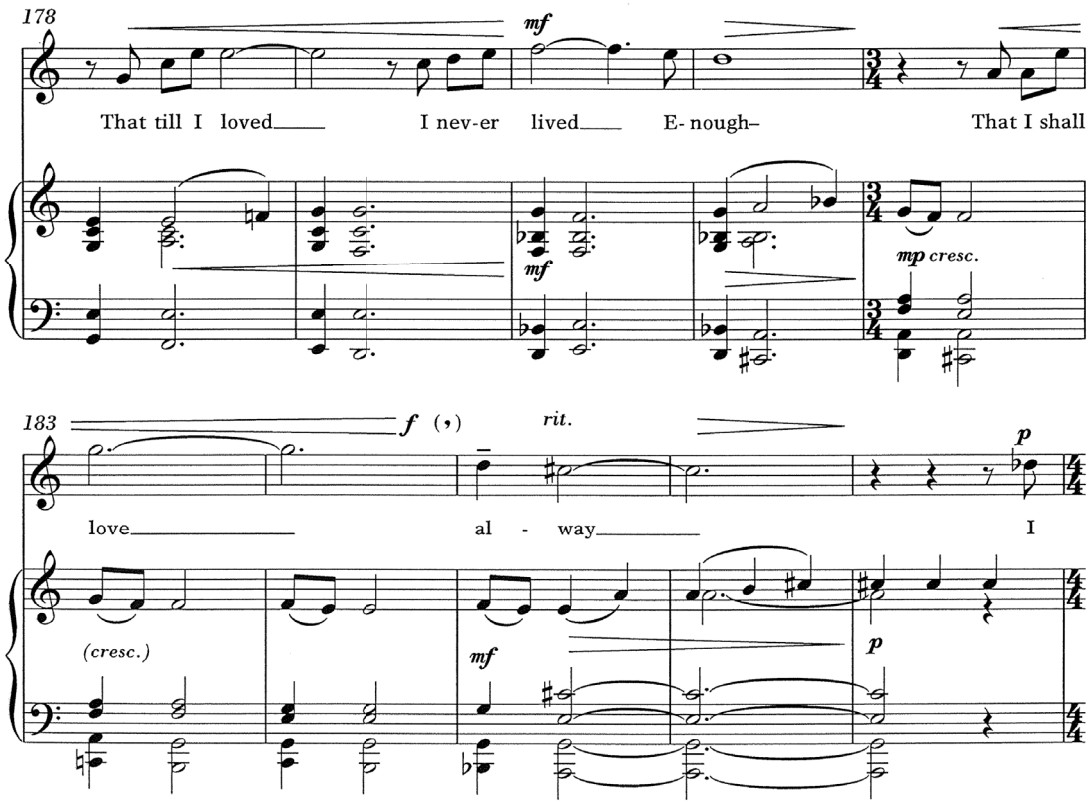
[52] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 420.

simple rhythm with a complex harmony expresses transcendent love, and its repetitive rhythmic and harmonic figure structures the entire song.



Example 3.23. Heggie, "That I did always love," mm. 168-172.

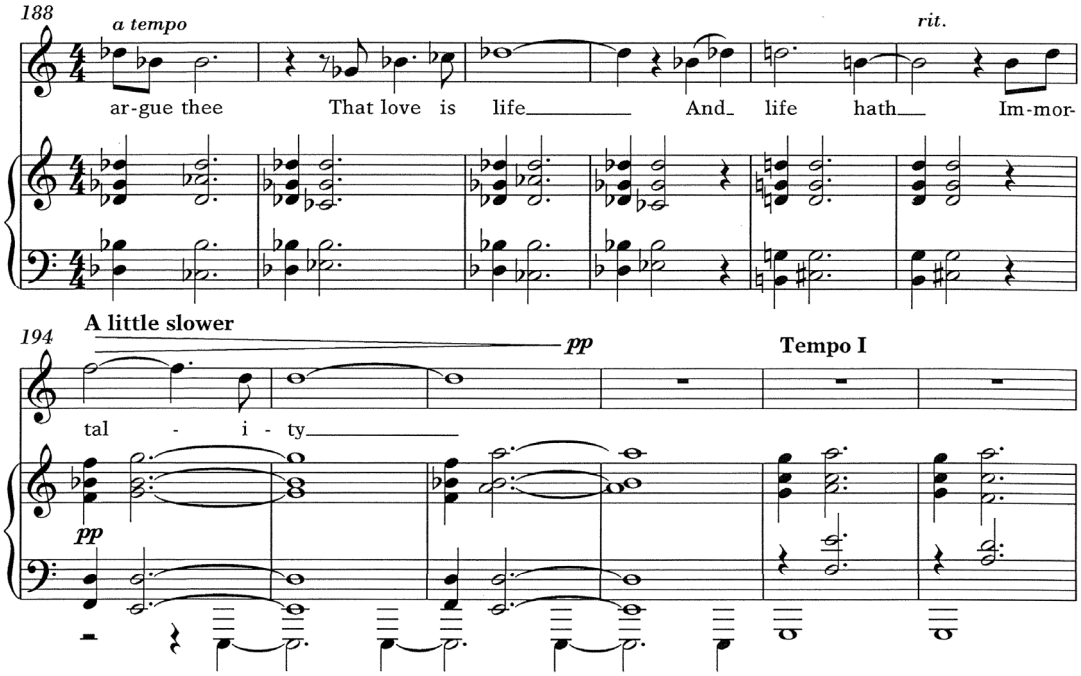
The expansive feeling is inherent in the vocal phrase. The emotion of the text telling about the meaningless life without love is enhanced by the rising movement along with crescendo and by the expansion of the range between the voice and the bass. The ascending linear progression of the voice, E-F-G, respectively on "loved"-"lived"-"love," intensifies the atmosphere and makes the important words stand out. Heggie uses crescendo and a higher tone to indicate the emotional growth in verse two, "That I shall love alway." "Love" takes the highest pitch, G_5, and strongest dynamics, ***f***, of the entire piece. Moreover, the meter changes to 3/4, and the complex harmonic progression gives a sense of moving and passion. The chromatic descending bass in mm. 182-185 arrives at the A dominant seventh chord, and the ascending right hand focusing on C♯ prepares the key change in the next section. The contrary motion between the voice and piano and between the left hand and right hand enriches the tone color.



Example 3.24. Heggie, "That I did always love," mm. 178-187.

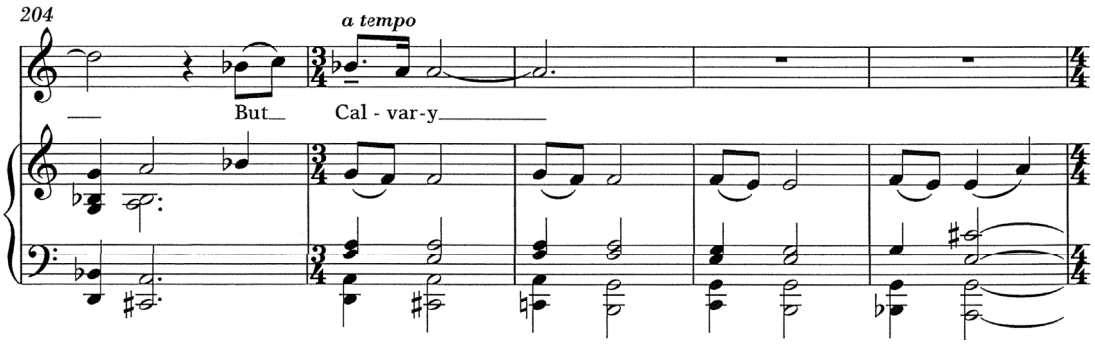
The music gets more intense through tonal shifts from m. 188. The phrase, "I argue thee," takes D♭, an enharmonic note of C♯ of the A dominant 7th chord, and the key area changes to G♭ major which is a tritone of the tonic of the song. It shifts soon to G major in m. 192, and then to B♭ major in m. 194.

The linear progression in the previous part returns here on the words, "life"-"life"-"Immortality." But this time, it is D♭-D♮-F rather than D♭-D♮-E. This missing E makes a very strong appearance in the low bass instead. The pedal of low E_1 in mm. 194-197 creates a new left-hand rhythmic figure. The unexpected F_5 in the voice and the low dissonant E_1 in the piano highlight through the wide range the concept of "Immortality." At the same time, the silent tension created by 'a little slower' tempo and decrescendo to ***pp*** may also reveal an abstract image of "Immortality."



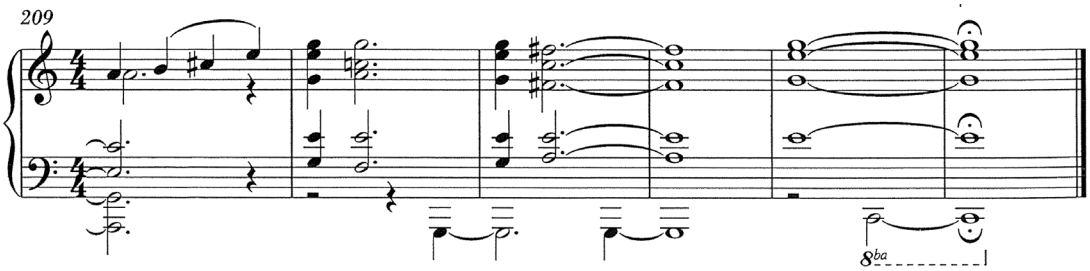
Example 3.25. Heggie, "That I did always love," mm. 188-199.

In m. 198, the return of the tonic chord releases the tension. The piano part of the first stanza repeats, but the sonority is considerably different due to the wider range between the higher right hand and the left hand with the low G_1 in the bass. Also, unlike its corresponding measure, m. 182 (see Example 3.24), the voice melody on "Calvary" in m. 205 is written a minor third above the right hand, and the dissonant B♭ in the voice conveys pain. The following chromatic descending line of the bass, D-C♯-C-B and C-B-B♭-A, is an expression of suffering.



Example 3.26. Heggie, "That I did always love," mm. 204-208.

In m. 209, the ascending right-hand motion does not stop on C♯ as it did in mm. 186-187 (see Example 3.24). The melody rather keeps climbing up to G as if the ascent of the right hand could imply the hill of Calvary. With this movement, the music stays in the key of C major in m. 210 and ends the song in the home key. Although the voice finishes on A, the sixth scale degree, the postlude ends strongly and stably with the dominant-tonic progression. The low G works as a dominant pedal, and the tonic chord settles in root position, its first appearance in the entire song. Moreover, the lowest note, C_1 can again describe "Immortality." The harmonic progression and low notes in the bass confirm the speaker's firm faith in her love.



Example 3.27. Heggie, "That I did always love," mm. 209-214.

5. Goodnight

Some say goodnight – at night –
I say goodnight by day –
Good-bye – the Going utter me –
Goodnight, I still reply –

For parting, that is night,
And presence, simply dawn –
Itself, the purple on the height
Denominated morn.

(J1739/ F586)[53]

Look back on Time with kindly eyes,
He doubtless did his best;
How softly sinks his trembling sun
In Human Nature's West!

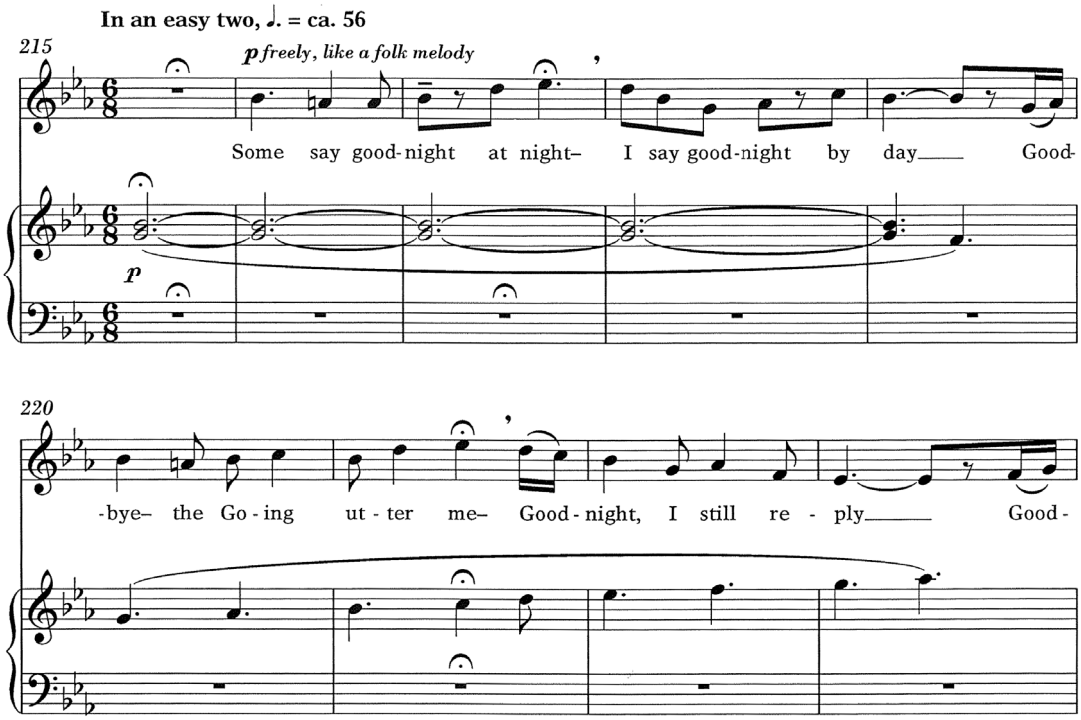
(J1478/ F1251)[54]

[53] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 1170.
[54] Ibid., 1023.

This song consists of two distinctive poems: “Some say goodnight – at night –” (J1739/ F586) and “Look back on time with kindly eyes” (J1478/ F1251). The first poem is pleasant and witty. The speaker prefers to say “goodnight” instead of “good-bye” to her friends even by day. It is because the speaker defines “parting” as “night.” The text shows a scene of Emily Dickinson parting with her friends. Due to her many experiences of the death of her family and friends, parting was like death to her. It is perhaps the reason why she preferred to say goodnight that guarantees reunion when the morning comes. The poem ends optimistically with “presence” of her friends, which is like beautiful purple dawn. The second poem, on the other hand, talks about the end of a human being’s life through setting of the sun in the west. Like the first poem, it is metaphoric. “His trembling sun” may illustrate either the fragility or passion of our life, while the expression of “softly sinks” gives a gentle, peaceful feeling to death. The first poem describes an image of a sunrise, and the second poem, a sunset. Combined in one song, these two poems imply our life fading out naturally someday. When we “look back on time,” we might recall memories of “parting” and the “presence” of family and friends.

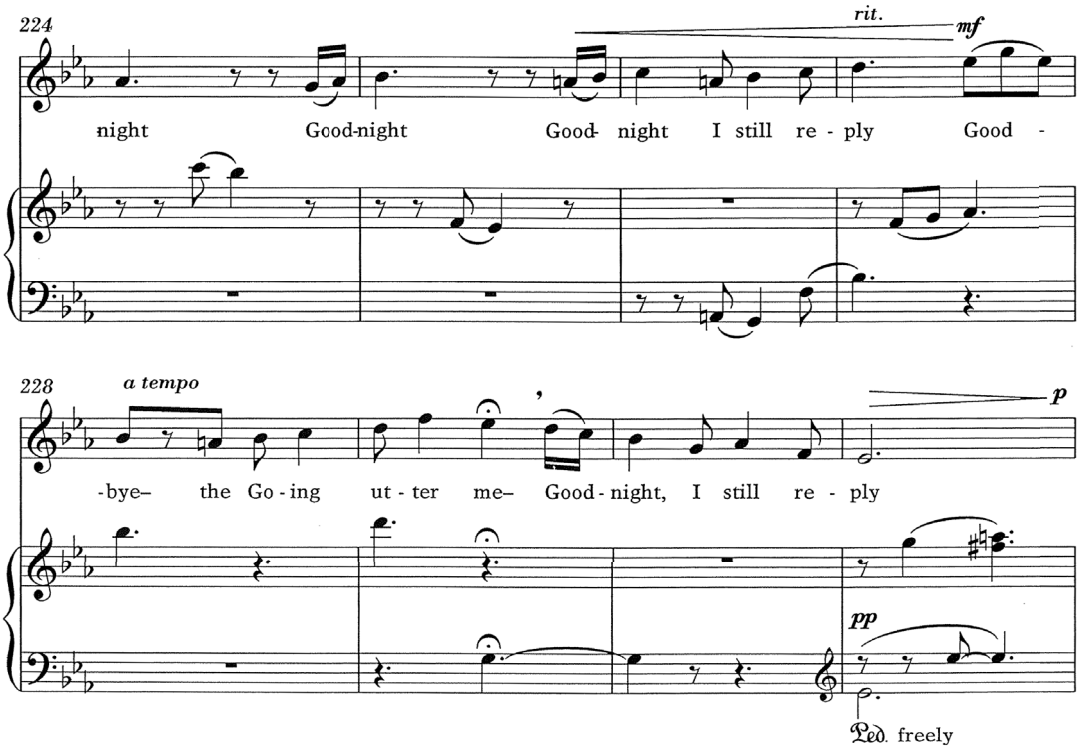
The first stanza of the song is very charming in its mood. The vocal melody sounds like a children’s song. The composer advises singing ‘freely, like a folk melody’ in an ‘easy two.’ The compound meter creates joyful and jaunty feelings. The rhythmic exchange between long-short (♩♪) and short-long (♪♩) keeps the song in interesting quality. Also, the rests in the middle of vocal phrases and the repetitive sixteenth notes on “Good-” provide a sense of wit.

The playful vocal melody is generally flowing, but different melodic figures describe the contrast between people’s greeting and the speaker’s uniqueness. The little pauses established by a fermata and a breathing mark in m. 217 and m. 221 distinguish two different greeting ways. The composer uses contrasting contours: the ascending phrases on people’s greeting, “Some say goodnight at night” and “Goodbye the Going utter me,” and descending lines on the speaker’s greeting, “I say goodnight by day” and “Goodnight, I still reply.” This contrasting motion sounds like questioning and responding. Also, the melody shows the composer’s exchanges of A♭ and A.



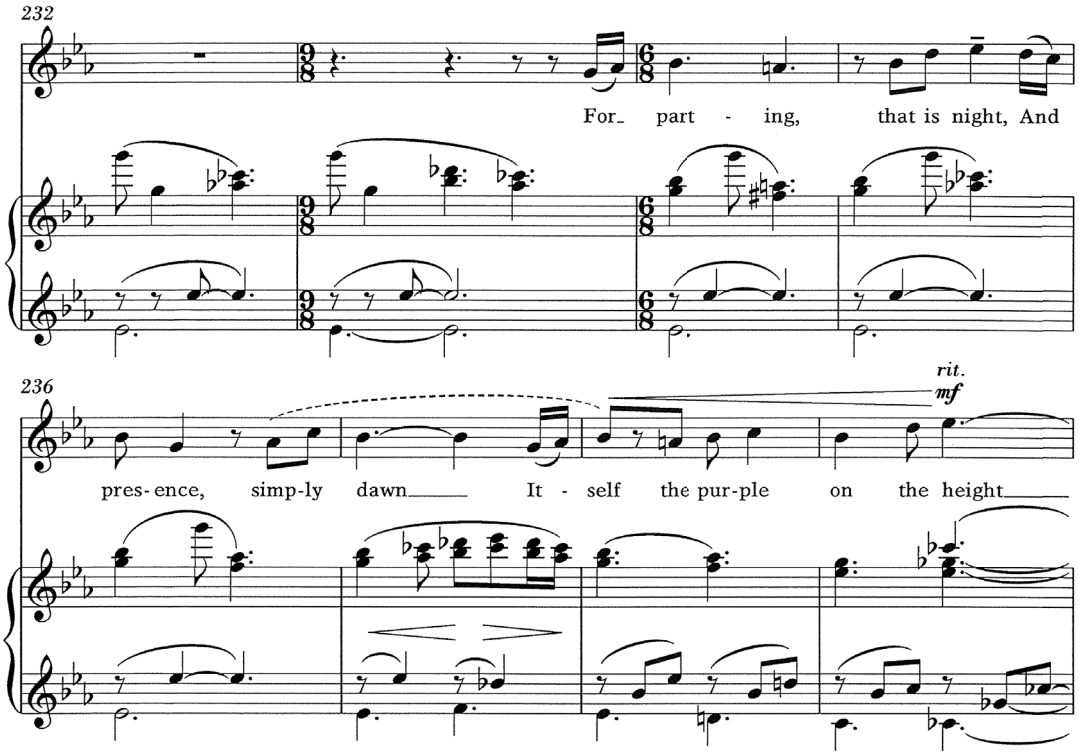
Example 3.28. Heggie, "Goodnight," mm. 215-223.

The song shows the organic relationship between the voice and piano as a simple duet. The thin piano texture sounds like another vocal line communicating with the voice part. The vague tonality in the opening E♭ major chord missing its root is defined firmly by the vocal line. The following piano part has a single line played by one hand. The ascending phrase from F to A♭ in mm. 219-222 passes the baton to the vocal phrase that shows a linear progression from A♭ to E♭ in mm. 224-227. The piano part here answers to the voice by filling the breaks in the voice part. The descending two-note figure jumps down drastically more than an octave while the vocal phrase ascends linearly. This answering figure generates a charming effect. Heggie repeats the words and verses of the first stanza throughout the entire song to continue the light mood, and the section with repetition of "goodnight" in mm. 224-231 works as a refrain.



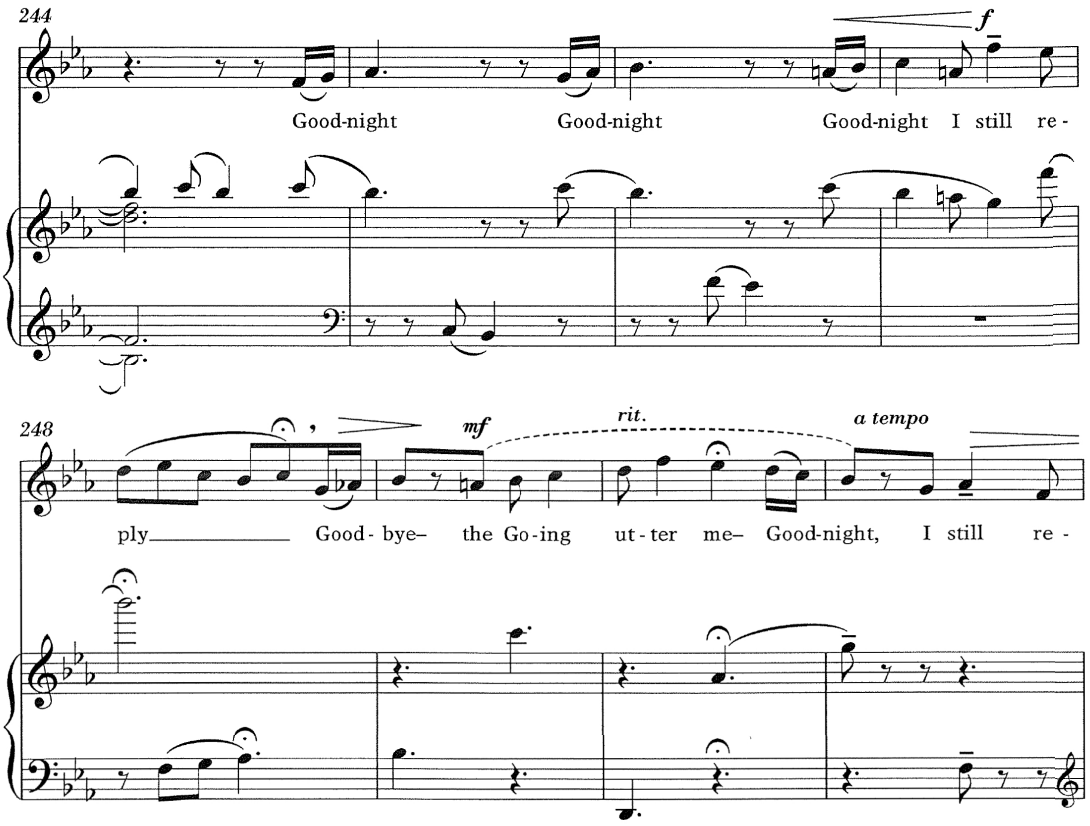
Example 3.29. Heggie, "Goodnight," mm. 224-231.

In the second stanza, the texture of the piano becomes richer, but the register remains high. The E♭ in the left hand confirms the strong tonality in E♭ major, and the vocal melody returns in the second stanza with some rhythmic variations. Unlike the first stanza, however, the harmony becomes much richer through the use of accidentals. In m. 231, F♯ and A♮ creates the sound of F♯ fully diminished chord in m. 231 (see Example 3.29). Heggie also adds C♭ and D♭ in the piano. Especially, C♭ gives a very rich sound on the second beat of m. 239 as ♭VI chord, borrowed from the parallel minor key. These rich harmonies paint the metaphoric text, the night and the purple dawn.



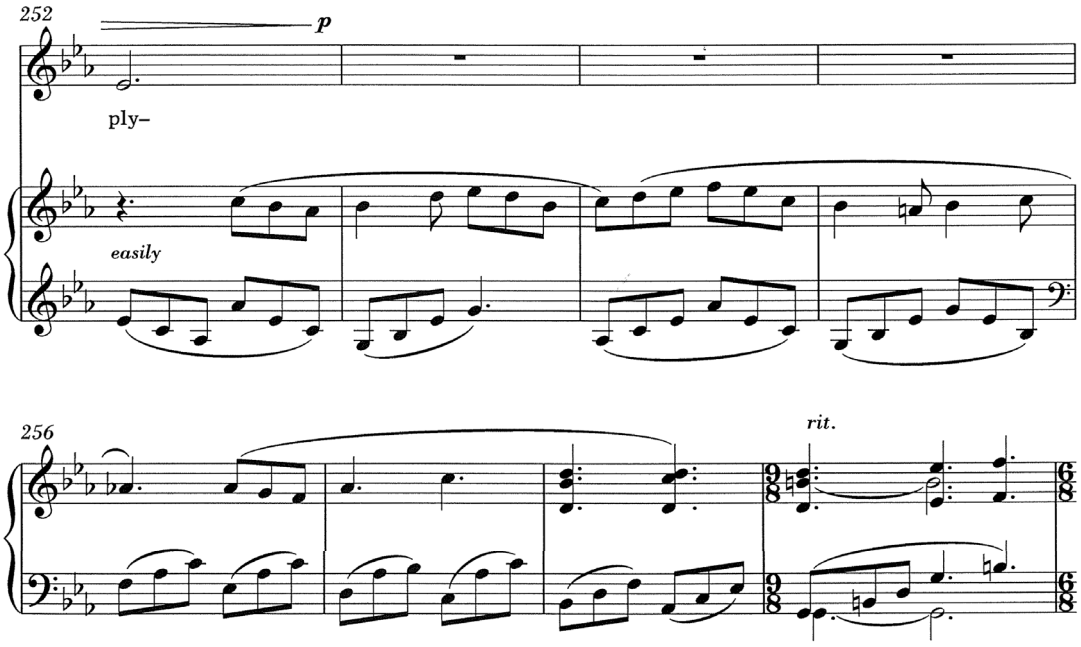
Example 3.30. Heggie, "Goodnight," mm. 232-239.

The answering figure, C-B♭, of the accompaniment in mm. 242-243 prepares the return of the refrain in mm. 244-251. The texture becomes thin again, but not as much as the first time in mm. 224-230. This time, the voice stresses "I still reply" with a high pitch, ***f***, and tenuto markings on "still" and with melisma on "reply." The right hand also plays the high $B♭_6$. The register shift in the piano in mm. 249-251 not only gives a fun sound but also makes a great contrast with the next section.



Example 3.31. Heggie, "Goodnight," mm. 244-251.

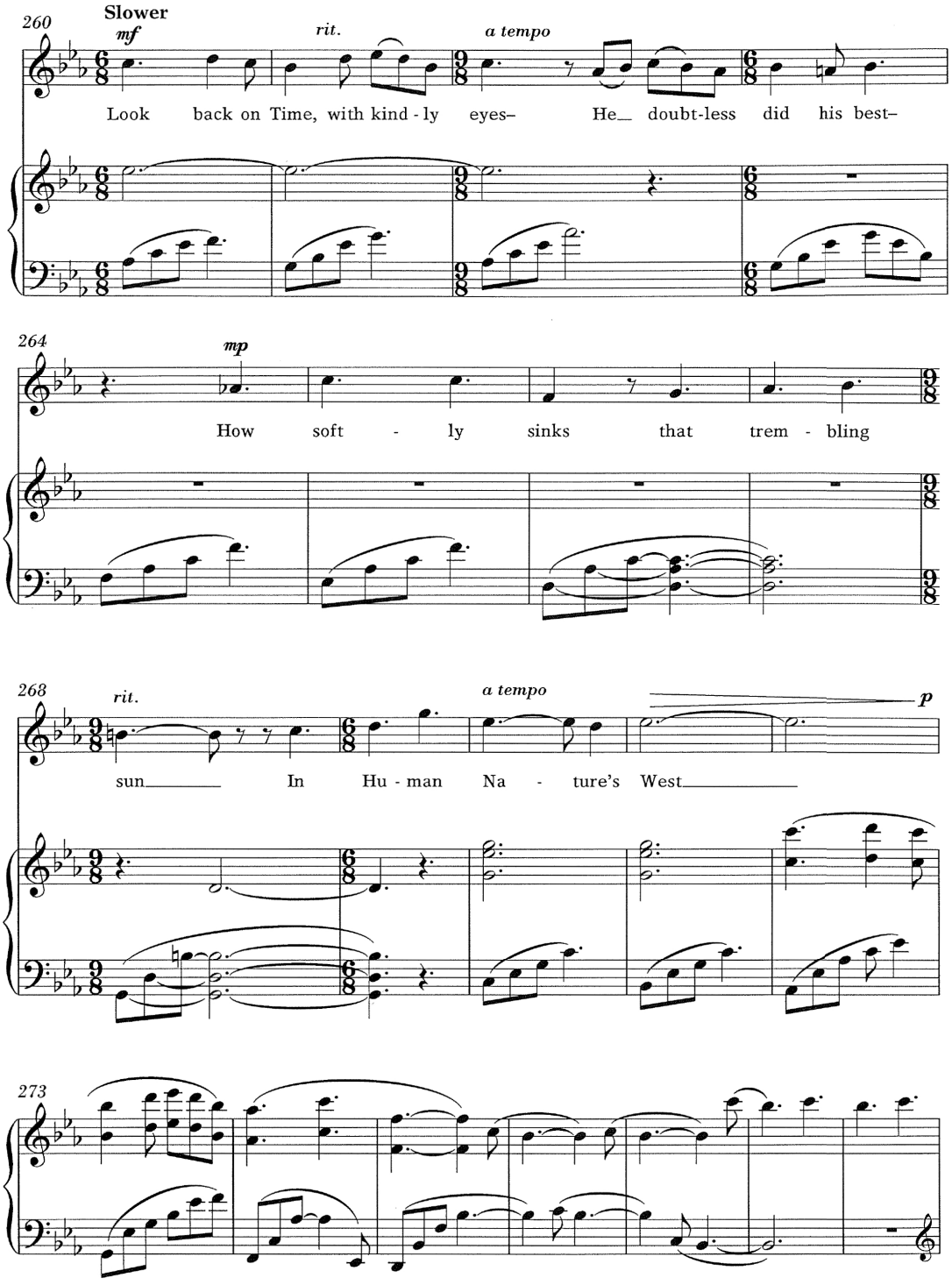
Heggie chooses a different musical language for the other poem "Look back on Time with kindly eyes." The tempo is slower, and the vocal phrase is smoother. The interlude in mm. 252-259 introduces new contrasting musical figures in the second poem: long legato phrases and an extensive descending figure in the bass from $A\flat_3$ to G_2, as the text speaks of time and aging. However, Heggie connects those distinctive sections smoothly by using similar musical devices such as compound meter, exchange of A♭-A♮, and the thin texture of the accompaniment.



Example 3.32. Heggie, "Goodnight," mm. 252-259.

The composer illustrates the words more specifically in the second poem. The meter changes between 6/8 and 9/8 to express the text more effectively in mm. 262 and 268. Especially, he uses 9/8 to elongate the note on "sun" in m. 268 which implies life. The dropping line from C to F in mm. 265-266 paints "softly sinks," and the following ascending phrase presents the passionate image of "that trembling sun." However, the ascent fails to reach C. It rather stays on a striking dissonance, B♮, for long instead. This dissonance describes a human's weary life. The decrescendo marking to ***p*** on "west" enhances the image of fading life.

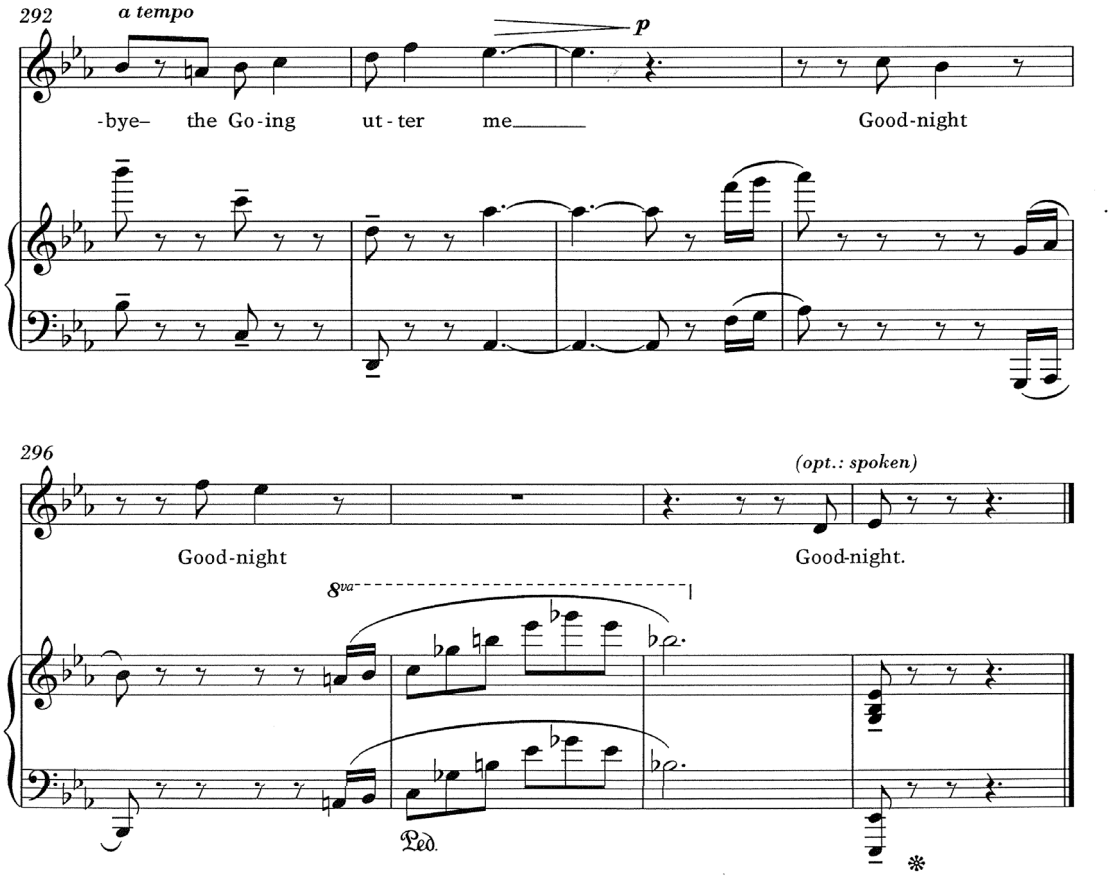
In mm. 260-275, the descending bass becomes more expansive than the one in the interlude in mm. 254-259. Overall, descent happens for the whole stanza from $A♭_3$ to D_2. But, in m. 268, the ceasing of the stepwise descending motion emphasizes the word, "sun." The bass drops down from D_3 to G_3 rather than continues to C_3 and holds the dominant chord of C minor. The descending motion resumes on C_3 in m. 270 and continues up to D_2 in m. 275. This extremely long descending linear progression for the whole section describes the aging of our lives also similar to a sunset.



Example 3.33. Heggie, "Goodnight," mm. 260-279.

The answering figure, C-B♭, in mm. 276-279 predicts the return of the first stanza which evokes the delightful mood. This time, the voice line is sung a cappella. Heggie never forgets to

offer interesting points at the end of the song. For the last refrain, the right hand doubles the left hand while keeping its lightness. In mm. 295-299, the voice and piano previously shown in mm. 244-247 exchange parts with each other (see example 3.31). At the end, the piano plays a surprising arpeggiated chord in mm. 297-298. Lastly, the singer has an option to speak the last "Goodnight," ending the song in a charming way.



Example 3.34. Heggie, "Goodnight," mm. 292-299.

Chapter 4: DARON HAGEN (B. 1961)

Biography

Daron Aric Hagen (b. 1961), an American composer, stage director, conductor, librettist, essayist, clinician, and collaborative pianist, has received acclaim for his prolific body of music. One of his chief mentors, Ned Rorem praised his extraordinary musicianship; "To say that he is a remarkable musician is to underrate him. Daron is music."[1] The wide array of his compositions covers various genres from vocal to instrumental music: opera, song, choral, symphonic, concerto, chamber, band, solo instrument, etc. Moreover, his composing includes both acoustic and electro-acoustic music.[2] The tonal, lyrical, and colorful sound of his music rooted in the American Neo-Romanticism and jazz is accessible to a wide-ranging audience.[3] Many of his works have been commissioned and performed by renowned organizations and performers including the New York Philharmonic and Leonard Bernstein. Also, his compositions have been recorded on various labels: Naxos, Sony Classical, Albany, Bridge, and others.

Hagen was born on November 4, 1961 and grew up in New Berlin, a suburb of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In his childhood, he lived in an artistic environment. According to his statement, his family was typically middle-class, but he became familiar with famous classical music repertoire through a commercial radio station that filled the house all the time.[4] In addition, his mother, Gwen Hagen, was a sculptor, and he enjoyed staying with her, observing the process of sculpting, and serving as a model occasionally. Hagen's mother was a violinist in her teens,

[1] Ned Rorem, "Learning with Daron," *Opera News*, April 1993, 48.

[2] Daron Hagen, "About," Daron Aric Hagen: Official Site, accessed December 21, 2018, https://www.daronhagen.com.

[3] Robert Kirzinger, "Hagen: Night, Again," *Fanfare: The Magazine for Serious Record Collectors*, *23,* no. 1 (September 1999): 247.

[4] James Reel, "A Conversation with Composer Daron Hagen," *Fanfare: The Magazine for Serious Record Collectors*, *23,* no. 1 (September 1999): 129-130.

and he remembers her sculpting him while listening to Paganini Violin Concertos in a peaceful summer.[5]

His experiences and memories of his family became a great inspiration for his musical works. His father bought a beautiful house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright when he was paid well as a corporate attorney. The architect became the subject of Hagen's first opera, *Shining Brow* (1992).[6] Hagen also remarks that he gets artistic ideas from his mother, who fashioned the clay into his image.[7] Moreover, his mother was also a writer, and the composer used some of his mother's diary entries as texts for some of his songs: "I am Loved" and "The Satyr" from *Love Songs* (1987), "An Irony" from *The Heart of the Stranger* (1999), and "I'll sing a song to my love" from *Letting Go* (1983-2002).

Hagen studied piano briefly at age 9 but quitted and resumed piano lessons with enthusiasm at age 14 after watching the movie, *The Sting*, with attractive music by Scott Joplin.[8] Soon after, his first composition, a rock musical, *Together*, was composed, directed, and conducted by him in 1976. In the same year, Hagen set "In the Beginning" by Dylan Thomas, and it was the first time he was inspired by the text by someone else and wanted to transform words into music.[9] At age 15, Hagen composed an orchestral piece, *Suite for a Lonely City*, which he conducted in concert. His mother sent a recording of the performance and the score to Leonard Bernstein to get his advice. Bernstein replied to his mother suggesting that Hagen study at Juilliard with David Diamond. But first in order to gain sufficient musical skills, he studied at the University of Wisconsin, Madison for two years as a high school student, after which he entered the Curtis Institute of Music to study with Ned Rorem. During his college years, the Philadelphia Orchestra performed his composition, *Prayer for Peace*, even though it was very rare for the orchestra to perform a student's work. This event made him seriously consider becoming a

[5] Daron Hagen, "Where Do You Get Your Ideas?" *Huffington Post*, July 2, 2012, Monday.
[6] Reel, 130.
[7] Hagen, "Where Do You Get Your Ideas?"
[8] Reel, 130.
[9] Hagen, "The Art of Song," https://www.daronhagen.com/events/art-of-song-philly.

composer.[10] Finally, Hagen was accepted to Juilliard where he studied with David Diamond and also with Joseph Schwantner and Bernard Rands and earned his Master of Music degree in 1987.

Hagen's reputation as an opera composer is significant. He was recognized as a "composer born to write operas" by the Chicago Tribune, and his opera, *Amelia* (2010), premiered by Seattle Opera, was hailed as "one of the 20 best operas of the 21st century" by Opera News.[11] His first opera, *Shining Brow*, was commissioned and premiered by the Madison Opera in Wisconsin in 1992. The close relationship with its librettist, Paul Muldoon, has continued in other operas, *Bandanna* (1999), *Vera of Las Vegas* (2003), and *The Antient Concert* (2005). He has also used the texts by Muldoon in two cycles: *Muldoon Songs* (1992) and *The Waking Father* (1995). His passion for composing operas has brought ten of them to audiences including his new work, *Orson Rehearsed* (2018). His operas have attracted a wide audience through international and national performances; by professional opera companies and also by colleges and high schools.[12]

Furthermore, Hagen is a great music educator and mentor. At first, he was doubtful about being a teacher. He found his passion for teaching, however, while teaching at Bard College: "So Starting in 1988, I poured myself into teaching composition and theory at Bard for nine years with all my heart. That's where I learned a lot about being a human being and a musician, and I worked out my values there."[13] He also taught at New York University, the City College of New York, and Curtis. He has given many masterclasses and served as artist-in-residence in numerous institutes in the United States. Since 2017, Hagen has served on the Artist Faculty of the Chicago College of the Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.[14]

Hagen has received a number of awards and fellowships from prominent organizations such as the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Kennedy

[10] Reel, 130.
[11] Hagen, "About."
[12] Ibid.
[13] Reel, 131.
[14] Hagen, "About."

Center, the American Society of Composers and Publishers, and the Rockefeller Foundation, among others.[15] Moreover, Hagen continues to play important roles in musical society as president of the Lotte Lehmann Foundation, as a trustee of the Douglas Moore Fund for American Opera, and so forth.[16]

Hagen's Song Composition

"The art song is the cornerstone of Hagen's compositional output."[17] The genre of art song has been so meaningful in his life since 1976 when he, in his first composition, *Together*, set a text to music. Hagen remarks:

> "The Art of Song" is a summation of what I've learned about setting words to music since those summer days in '76; it opens a new door in my life as a vocal composer by surveying my past, offering, in its final stretch, a glimpse of the sort of vocal music I'd like to spend the final act of my life as a composer creating.[18]

Hagen has composed more than 300 art songs, which show great diversity in textual materials as well as in accompaniment. In addition to songs for one solo voice and piano, he has written several song cycles for two and three or more voices. For the accompaniment, some of his art songs are written for voice and small ensembles and/or other solo instruments besides the piano as well as for voice and orchestra. As he says, in over forty years, he has set texts by hundreds of authors including his mother and himself. Besides poems and prose, his choice of texts includes advertisements, transcripts, diaries, newspaper articles, and lists.[19] He has set many great poets including Emily Dickinson, William Blake, Robert Browning, Sara Teasdale, Walt Whitman, etc. Also, he has worked closely with a contemporary poet, Paul Muldoon, a winner of the Pulitzer Prize, whose words and language inspire him to compose good music.[20]

---

[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] James Chute, "Hagen, Daron Aric," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, accessed October 25, 2018, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.
[18] Hagen, "The Art of Song."
[19] Ibid.
[20] Reel, 132.

Hagen is "naturally drawn to the combination of words and music," which combined with his affection for language that made him want to be a writer when he was young.[21] The process of combining text and music is very intuitive to him. "When it comes to setting texts to music, I look at the text, I hear it, I feel it, and I just write it. There's never a question of how I get a particular sound," he says.[22] When writing songs, he prefers to keep the original text as per Ned Rorem's instruction. Hagen says "I do not repeat words. The poem already has a music of its own. It's my duty to find that music and cooperate with that structure and express it melodically and harmonically."[23] Thus, Hagen carefully constructs the form of the song to follow the structure and flow of the original text. Moreover, for the ultimate expression of the text, a powerful performance is also necessary. According to Carol Kimball's interview with Hagen, he requires singers to respect the text, to have excellent diction, and to know how to act.[24]

The musical style in his songs is also quite diverse including works of simplicity and complexity which are tonal, atonal or polytonal. Russell Platt, also a student of Ned Rorem remarks comments upon Hagen's diverse compositional traits:

> … Like Debussy, he is at home in both opera and song; like Schumann, his songs have a natural and conversational feel. Hagen is also a gifted pianist, and if his piano parts can range from a Schubertian simplicity to a Straussian lushness, they always keep the singer's role first and foremost –the words are always clear…The good Gallic values of freshness, clarity, and consistently elegant craftsmanship – starting, arguably, in Gounod and continuing forth through Poulenc and Rorem – find their mark in Hagen too, but are mixed with limited elements of American jazz and music theater that betray him as a child of the suburban 1970s.[25]

Hagen's song composition is strongly influenced by his great teacher, Ned Rorem. Platt also reveals Rorem's teachings: "Music comes from language, and no one is going to provide us with an American song repertory unless we do it ourselves; never presume to repeat a word in singing that the poet has not repeated on the page; and always compose with the principle of

---

[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid., 133.
[23] Kimball, *Song*, 346.
[24] Ibid., 345.
[25] Russell Platt, "Artful simplicity: The Songs of Daron Hagen," *Journal of Singing, 55*, no. 1 (September 1998): 3.

economy uppermost in your mind."[26] Hagen states he learned so much from Ned Rorem, especially exquisite small forms.[27] He has also used Rorem's specific musical devices in song composition. For example, Rorem's influence came in the use of range to highlight meaning. "I took from Ned the idea or rule of choosing one single-most important word and putting it on the highest or lowest note in the song and never repeating that note."[28]

Although Hagen is a composer for both opera and art song, he clearly distinguishes the compositional style between these two genres: "An opera is a mural; an art song is an exquisite miniature, requiring the tiniest of brush strokes."

> Art songs are the closest music comes to being the equivalent of a snapshot. Operas are as close as so-called high-culture music comes to being the equivalent of a motion picture. The longer an art song composer can sustain a desired mood, the more perfect a setting in which the listener can experience that text, while an opera composer must ruthlessly ration such moments of stasis, knowing that he'll have to pay for them by generating energy elsewhere in the score.[29]

His songs show this philosophy and delicately sustain the atmosphere of the text over the entirety of the piece. Moreover, the form and vocal line sound simple and modest with a lyrical melody, but the accompaniment with its moods, tone, and harmonic language expresses the meaning behind the words.

His vast song repertoire shows a variety of authors, themes, styles, textures, musical devices, and so forth. But the keyword of his compositional style is simplicity whether the songs are dramatic, haunting, intense, and humorous.[30] Jane Redding remarks that "Hagen believes it is easy to be clever, hard to be simple, and he is at his best when he keeps things simple."[31]

Hagen's tendency to keep things simple for deep expression corresponds to Dickinson's concise poetry. Hagen expresses his affection toward the poet: "I adore Emily Dickinson's poetry

---

[26] Ibid.

[27] Reel, 130.

[28] Paul Kevin Kreider, "The Art Songs of Daron Hagen: Lyrical Dramaticism and Simplicity with an Interpretive Guide to Rittenhouse Songs and Resuming Green" (D.M.A. diss., University of Arizona, 1999), 28, accessed December 5, 2018, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

[29] Jane McCalla Redding, "An Introduction to American Song Composer Daron Aric Hagen (b. 1961) and His Miniature Folk Opera: Dear Youth" (D.M.A. diss., Louisiana State University, 2002), 10, accessed December 4, 2018, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

[30] Ibid., 11.

[31] Ibid.

because of its trenchant brevity and fearless imagery; she's on the surface seemly, yet deeply subversive of the social norms of her time."[32] He has set seven poems by Dickinson, and his new works of six more Dickinson settings will be included in his new composition, *Art of the Song*, An evening-long cycle for six singers and piano four-hands, commissioned by Lyric Fest and Brooklyn Art Song Society. It will be premiered on November 4, 2019.[33]

Four Dickinson Songs (2014)

Four Dickinson Songs, for voice and piano[34]

1. Of All the Souls
2. A Dying Eye
3. If You Were Coming
4. Wild Nights

Four Dickinson Songs by Daron Hagen

The group of songs was commissioned by Lyric Fest of Philadelphia in 2014 and dedicated to Laura Ward, pianist and Co-founding Artistic Director of Lyric Fest. It was premiered on July 15, 2014, at Goodheart Hall, the Music Room, in Bryn Mawr College, Philadelphia, PA by Joseph Gaines, tenor and Laura Ward, piano.[35] The score was published by Burning Sled Music in 2014. A recording, *Daron Hagen: 21st-Century Song Cycles* performed by Kelly Ann Bixby, soprano and Laura Ward, piano, was released on November 10, 2017, by Naxos Records. Also, the Juilliard School recently presented the songs in the event, "The Song Cycles of Daron Hagen" in May 2018.[36]

Hagen firstly composed two of the songs, "If You Were Coming" and "Wild Nights," in January 1993. But he left them in a drawer and forgot about them. Thanks to Laura Ward, who

---

[32] Daron Hagen, e-mail message to author, March 18, 2019.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Daron Hagen, *Four Dickinson Songs: For Voice and Piano* (New York: Burning Sled Music, 2014).
[35] Hagen, "Four Dickinson Songs," https://www.daronhagen.com/store/four-dickinson-songs.
[36] Hagen, "The Song Cycles of Daron Hagen," https://www.daronhagen.com/events/juilliard-song-cycles.

asked Hagen to write Dickinson settings for Lyric Fest's program about American women poets in song, Hagen took out the forgotten pieces, revised them, and put together with his new compositions, "Of All the Souls" and "A Dying Eye." Hagen states that *Four Dickinson Songs* is not a cycle but a group because he composed the songs individually and just gathered them. All the songs are about love, his favorite song subject.[37] But each of four poems contains ambiguous themes of sensual and/or spiritual love, afterlife, and immortality. Hagen uses compositional features such as wide range, complex harmonic language, and use of tritone within a simple musical form to express the ambiguity in the text. The returning musical devices throughout all four songs unite them organically.

1. Of all the Souls

> Of all the Souls that stand create –
> I have elected – One –
> When Sense from Spirit – files away –
> And Subterfuge – is done –
>
> When that which is – and that which was –
> Apart – intrinsic – stand –
> And this brief tragedy of flesh –
> Is shifted – like a Sand –
>
> When Figures show their royal Front –
> And Mists – are carved away,
> Behold the Atom – I preferred –
> To all the lists of Clay!
>
> (J664/ F279)[38]

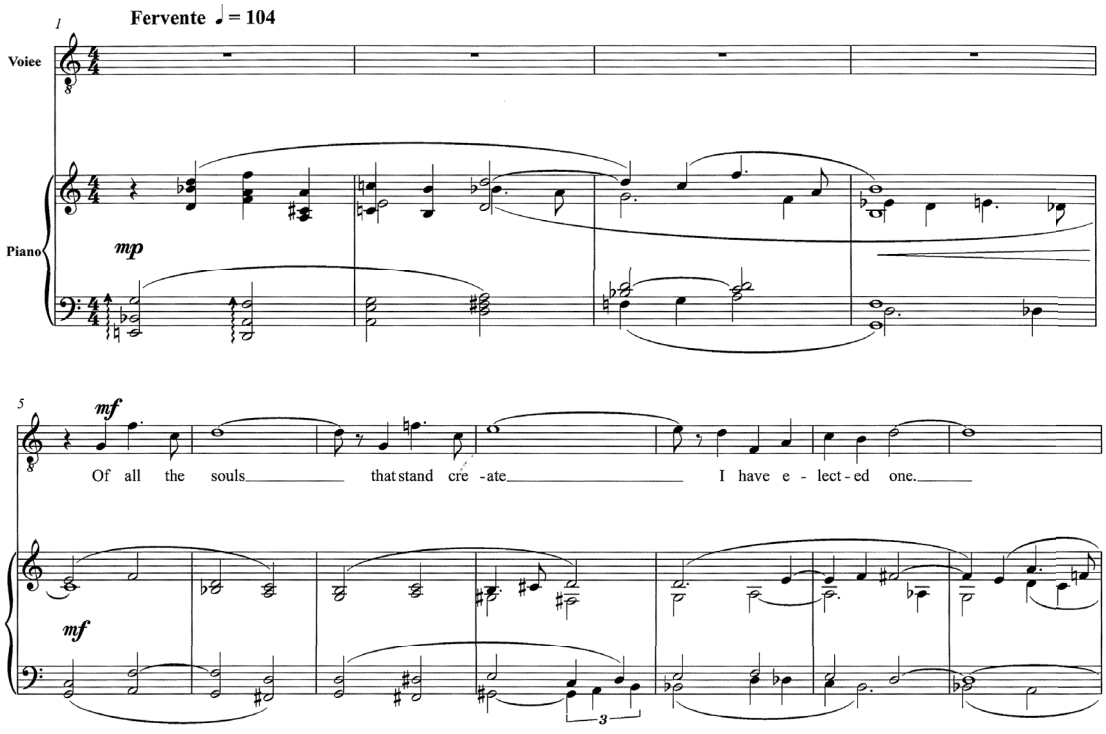
In the first song, "Of All the Souls," the speaker declares confidently that she has selected only one among a vast number of souls. Her choice is spiritual rather than physical. In the first and the third stanzas, her belief becomes clear and certain without "Subterfuge" or "Mists" in the afterlife: "When Sense from Spirit – files away –," and "When Figures show their royal Front –." The "soul" she has chosen is like an "Atom" which is mere but essential. On the other hand, the

[37] Hagen, "Four Dickinson Songs," https://www.daronhagen.com/store/four-dickinson-songs.
[38] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 511.

middle part stresses how the material life, “brief tragedy of flesh,” is meaningless and unstable “like a Sand” when the soul gets free from the body and “intrinsic – stand.” The structure of this three-stanza poem effectively shows contrasts between spiritual life and material life.

Hagen uses an ABA’ song form to convey this contrast clearly. The A part consists of a four-measure prelude and an eight-measure vocal phrase that repeats. The brief prelude opens the song and foresees the characteristics of the vocal phrase: the mood, melodic shape, rhythmic figure, and tonality.

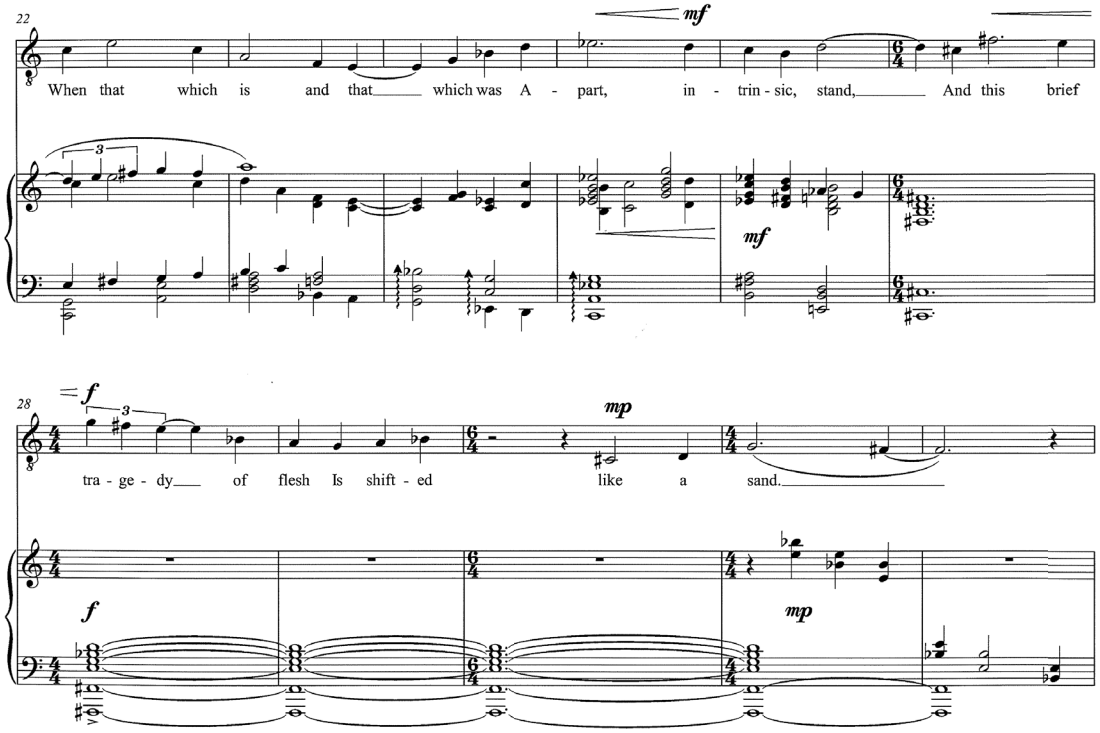
Hagen delivers the triumphant tone of the text. The beginning of the prelude settles the fervent mood, and the melody in the right hand, D-F-A-C-B-D, recurs in the strongest vocal statement, “I have elected one” in mm. 9-11. Moreover, the large leaps and dotted rhythm in the prelude and in the opening vocal phrase provide a firm and confident feeling too. The tonality is vague, and the music begins with the E diminished triad. The whole prelude functions as a dominant that reaches chromatically toward the tonic of the C major key.



Example 4.1. Hagen, “Of All the Souls,” mm. 1-11.

The tonality becomes clear as the speaker strongly proclaims his choice. However, there are still hints of complexity and unstableness. Although the music finally announces the arrival of the key of C major in m. 5, the tonic chord is still weak in second inversion. The beginning accompaniment is simply chordal, but it is varied by sub-beats. In mm. 9-12, the harmonic progression is identical to the chromatic approach in the prelude (Edim-Dm-Am-DM-GmM^7-Dm). Also, the vocal melody is centered on D, the second scale degree. Part A consists of complexity within the simple structure with the repeating motive and melody.

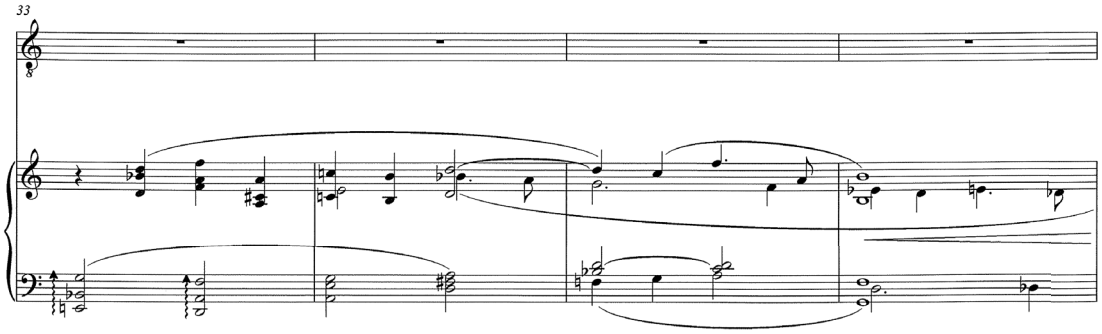
Part B in mm. 21-32 presents significantly contrasting musical figures to those in part A. This section is through-composed unlike the A part, which consists of repetitive motives and phrases. The meter changes back and forth between 4/4 and 6/4. The chromatic and unpredictable vocal line largely shapes an arch with a climax on "tragedy." In addition, the harmonic progression of the accompaniment wanders busily through successive seventh chords for the first half, and then it stops moving for the second half. With these characteristics, the whole vocal line of this section sounds like one long legato phrase with a sense of wandering and instability.



Example 4.2. Hagen, "Of All the Souls," mm. 22-32.

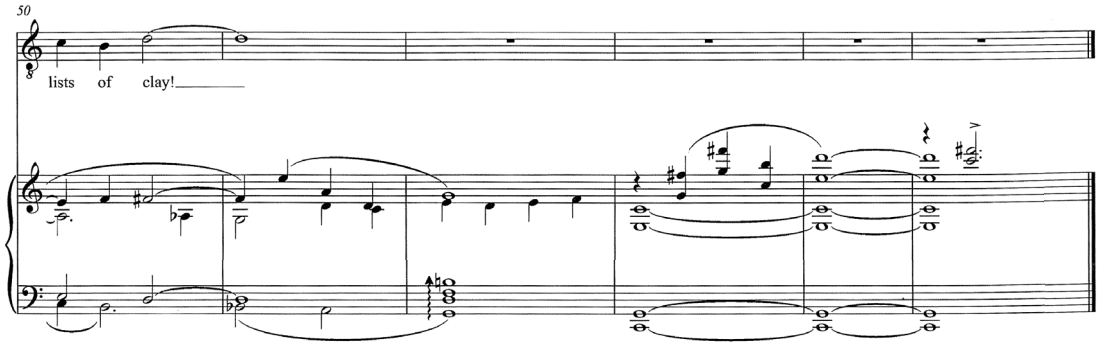
Hagen highlights some specific words and expressions. In m. 22, the piano part plays an ascending figure on “that which is,” implying the soul, while it descends on “that which was,” the body. These two contrary contours appear together as a contrary motion between voice and piano in mm. 24-25 and illustrate the image of being “Apart” through a wide range. Right after that, the bass sinks in mm. 26-28 and brings “tragedy.” Hagen puts an emphasis on this dramatic word on the highest pitch and with the strongest dynamics in the vocal line. Also, the only use of a triplet rhythm in voice and the long-sustained chord in the piano emphasize “tragedy.” This long chord held from m. 28 to m. 32 acts as an extended F# dominant pedal of B that never resolves. At the same time, the right hand creates a strong conflict with the E half-diminished 7th chord. Hagen’s such musical tool heightens the drama to express the forlorn and meaningless material life that is “shifted – like a Sand.”

The third stanza emphasizes what the speaker says in the first stanza, and it is natural to have the same music. The first two verses of the poem imply the afterlife when figures reveal their true identity, and everything becomes clear. Then, the last two verses are about the speaker’s preference. Hagen takes the same music from the A part except for the ending with three extra measures. A series of descending tritones in mm. 31-32 (see Example 4.2) leads to the return of the music of part A in m. 33. Now the origin of the tritone in the E diminished chord at the very beginning of the song is revealed.



Example 4.3. Hagen, “Of All the Souls,” mm. 33-36.

At the end of the song, the dominant chord finally resolves to the strong tonic chord in root position in m. 53. But the tonic chord is immediately disrupted with the seventh and a tritone in the right hand which strike the listener's ears.



Example 4.4. Hagen, "Of All the Souls," mm. 50-55.

The song reflects the poetic meaning through the structure with its contrasts between A and B sections. However, the differences between these two parts are not completely oppositional. Part A sounds relatively simpler than Part B, but musical complexity is built into both parts to express the ambiguity of the text. Even though the speaker declares her love with assurance in the first and third stanzas, the reunion with the soul of her loved one will certainly happen in the afterlife. For this reason, within the simple song form, Hagen interweaves this song with stable and unstable images. The balance between simplicity and complexity represents Dickinson's poetry well with its concise and simple words which express higher-level meanings.

2. A Dying Eye

I've seen a Dying Eye
Run round and round a Room –
In search of Something – as it seemed –
Then Cloudier become –
And then – obscure with Fog –
And then – be soldered down
Without disclosing what it be
'Twere blessed to have seen –

(J547/ F648)[39]

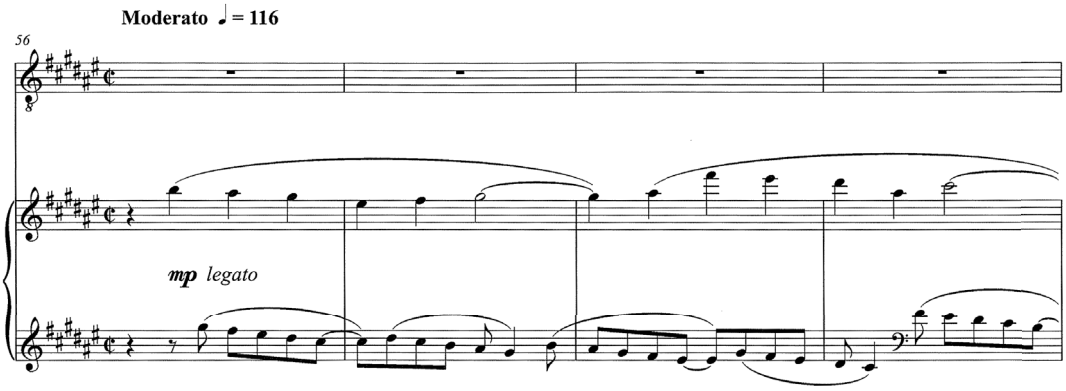
[39] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 419.

In this poem, the speaker observes a dying person who is seeking something before his death. Dickinson uses a singular noun, an 'Eye.' The singular form gives a powerful image of the eye that focuses attention. The poetic atmosphere is dark and misty. The eye's sight becomes "cloudier" and "obscure with Fog," and the person finally dies – "soldered down" – without a revelation of what he has been searching for. It can be a lover, an object, the meaning of life, an answer, or anything. The poem finishes in uncertainty and vagueness. The speaker is not able to know the answer forever. However, she sees something "blessed" at the end because the dead person perhaps finally finds the answer in his eternal rest.

Hagen describes this dark but optimistic tone of the poem through the tonality. The song is in a minor mode that keeps the gloomy tone. But the key signature is D♯ minor rather than E♭ minor which is more common. The sharps of the D♯ minor key psychologically bring more bright and intense feelings than flats. Moreover, the tonality itself is Hagen's synesthetic reaction to express the image of an eye. In his song, "Blemish" from *Muldoon Songs* (1992), which is about a girl with one brown and one blue eye, he expresses the image of the girl through bi-tonality of E♭ major and B major, because he 'sees' brown when he 'hears' E♭ and blue for B.[40] This song, "A Dying Eye," also shows Hagen's harmonic intention with the E♭ minor key to depict the color of the eye, typically brown.[41]

Hagen uses text painting to picture the image of the eye. The circular figures in both hands in the prelude in mm. 56-59 visualize the movement of the searching eye. The right hand moves in quarter notes while the left hand is in eighth notes. The difference of the note value illustrates the speed of the eye's movement. Also, the large leaps demonstrate the eye changing the direction. In m. 60, the voice line enters with the right-hand figure and repeats throughout the song. This continuous running figure in both voice and piano depicts the unceasing searching.

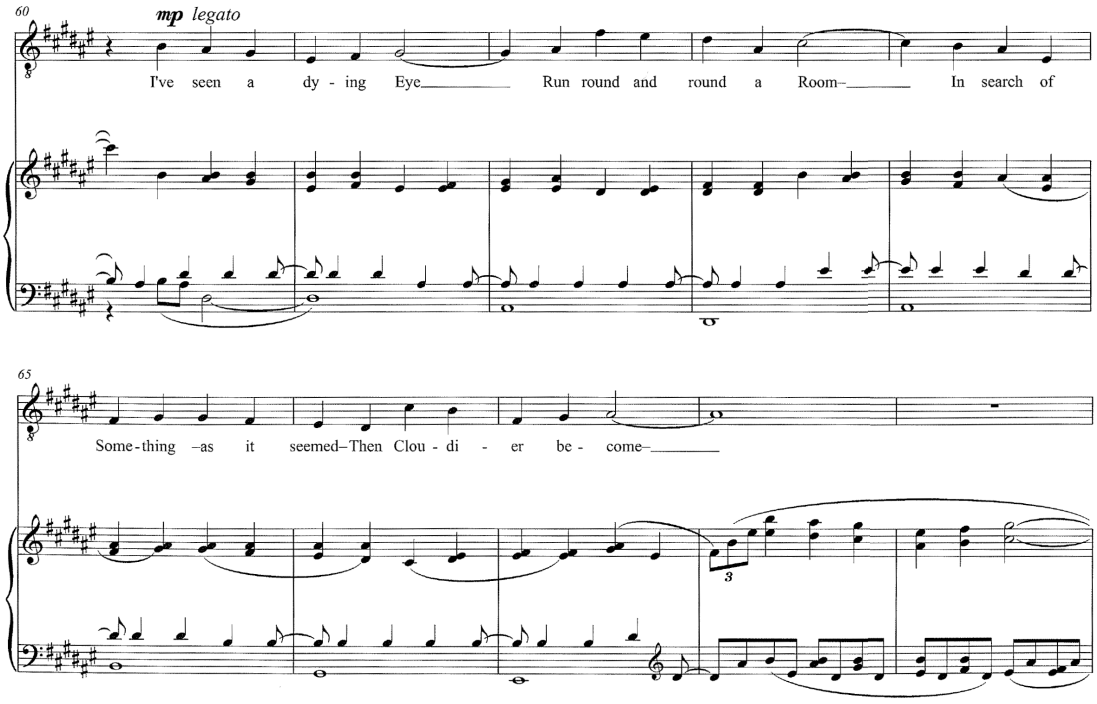
[40] Hagen, "Muldoon Songs," https://www.daronhagen.com/store/muldoon-songs.
[41] Daron Hagen, e-mail message to author, March 18, 2019.



Example 4.5. Hagen, "A Dying Eye," mm. 56-59.

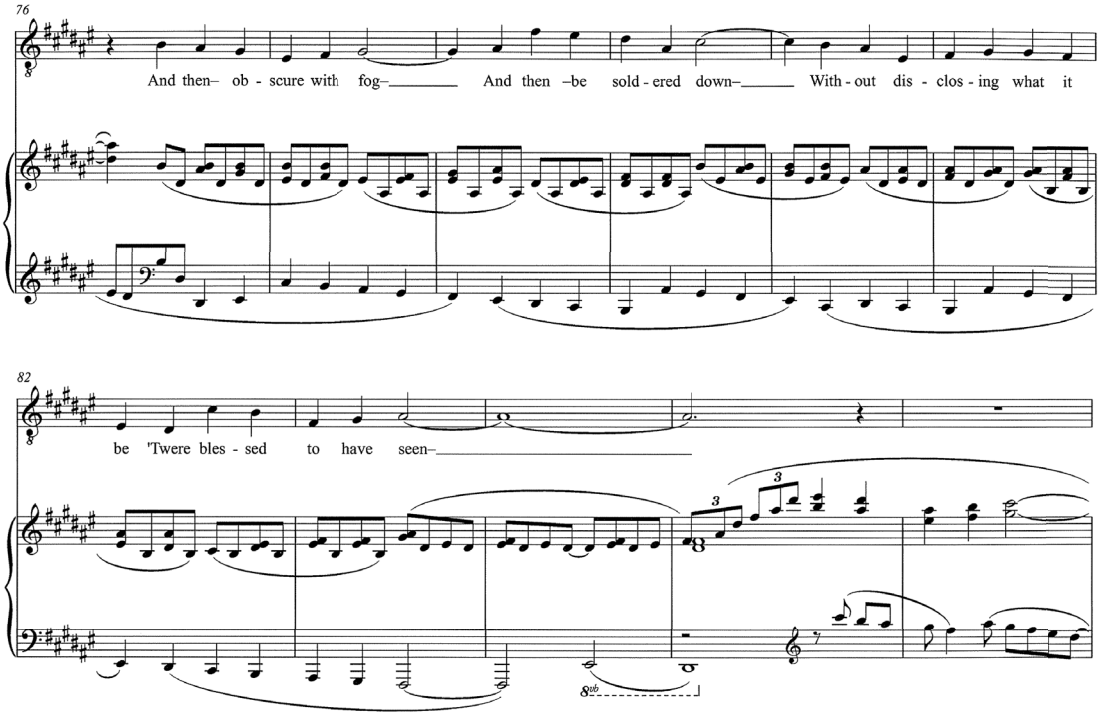
Hagen also provides a sense of vagueness and continuity through a meter play. Listeners expect the opening phrase with a quarter pick up because it is natural to hear a long note or a high note to be placed on the downbeat. However, the score indicates that the vocal phrase begins on the second beat (see Example 4.6). As a result, the long notes of "Eye," "Room," and "become" and high notes of "round" and "Cloudier" are on the third beats rather than the downbeats. In addition, slurs and ties going over the bar line in both voice and piano blur and delay the downbeats. The vagueness of the downbeat increases when the unaccented syllable 'er' of ''Cloudier" comes on the downbeat. Also, the repeating sound of 'R' established by Dickinson in the verse, "Run round and round a Room" enhances the lyrical legato vocal phrase.

The song is strophic in the AA form. The circular phrase repeats throughout the entire song, but the texture of the accompaniment varies by adding new layers over the course of the song. The right hand and tenor line in the left hand in mm. 60-67 are combined in the left hand of the interlude in mm. 68-75. On the other hand, here the right hand adds the sonority with parallel fifths, and these consecutive open intervals enhance the vague atmosphere.



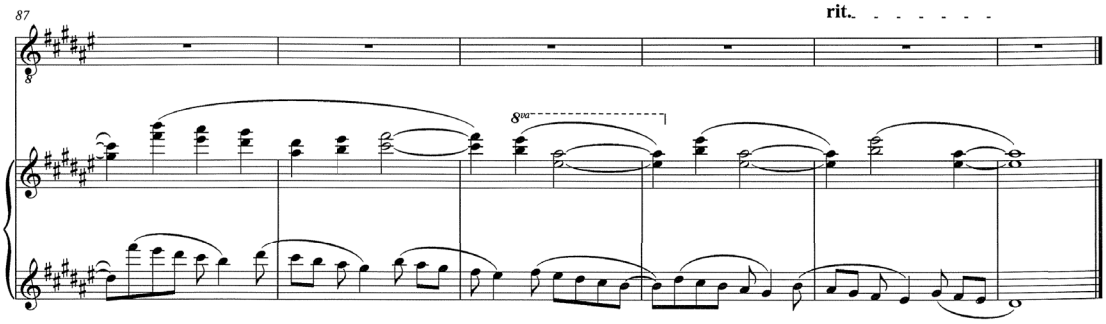
Example 4.6. Hagen, "A Dying Eye," mm. 60-69.

In m. 76, the left hand in the interlude is shifted to the right hand, and Hagen puts a new and rich bass line in the low register as the text speaks of death. The circular figure of this new bass line is rhythmic augmentation of the left hand in the prelude by lengthening the rhythmic value from eighth notes to quarter notes (see Example 4.5). This bass line extensively descends to the very low note, $D\sharp_1$, while the right hand rises through triplets to $D\sharp_6$ in m. 85. Like the first song, "Of All the Souls," the wide gap between $D\sharp_1$ and $D\sharp_6$ illustrates death – the separation between the body and spirit.



Example 4.7. Hagen, "A Dying Eye," mm. 76-86.

The following postlude echoes the prelude but heavenly in a higher register. Adding open sonority of parallel fourths above the right-hand melody sounds possibly like a church-bell. The music with the high pitches and open sonority sensitively demonstrates Dickinson's optimistic view of death. The harmonic progression of the entire song is quite simple and predictable, but the ending feels open-ended by adding the supertonic, E♯, as the speaker never finds the answer.



Example 4.8. Hagen, "A Dying Eye," mm. 87-92.

3. If you were coming in the Fall

If you were coming in the Fall,
I'd brush the Summer by
With half a smile, and half a spurn,
As Housewives do, a Fly.

If I could see you in a year,
I'd wind the months in balls –
And put them each in separate Drawers,
For fear the numbers fuse –

If only Centuries, delayed,
I'd count them on my Hand,
Subtracting, till my fingers dropped
Into Van Dieman's Land.

If certain, when this life was out –
That yours and mine, should be.
I'd toss it yonder, like a Rind,
And take Eternity –

But, now, uncertain of the length
Of this, that is between,
It goads me, like the Goblin Bee –
That will not state – its sting.

(J511/ F356)[42]

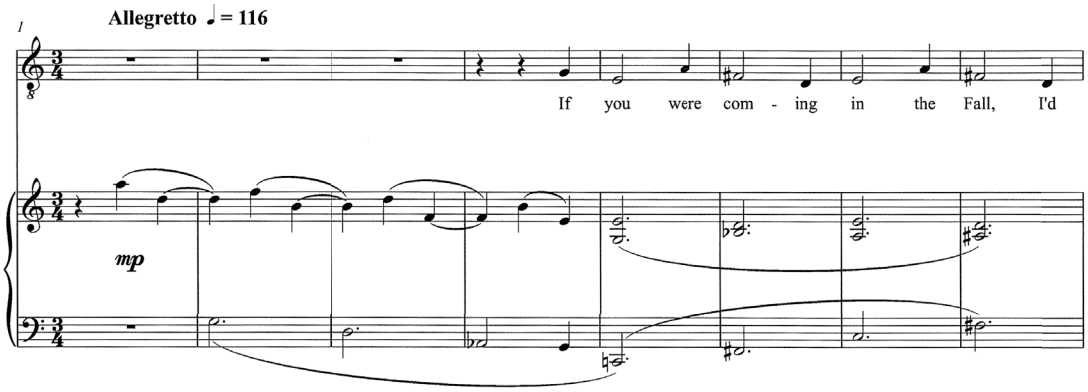
In this poem, the speaker is longing for her unreachable lover. The text has five stanzas which can be grouped as four hypothetical stanzas and one factual stanza. Throughout the first four stanzas, the length of waiting time till the reunion with her lover increases from a season, a year, centuries, to an afterlife. Throughout the stanzas, the poem expresses the speaker's different emotional states. For the season, the speaker does not acknowledge how long she will be waiting. She just lives a mundane life as a housewife, "with half a smile and half a spurn." But when it becomes a year, she begins to feel "fear." Even though centuries are an impossible span of time to live, she seems still hopeful as she states "only" centuries. On the other hand, she feels "certain" to meet the lover and "take Eternity" with him in her afterlife. "I'd toss it yonder, like a Rind" illustrates the poet's optimistic view on death. However, when the speaker realizes the reality in the last stanza, her emotion changes to be uncertain and anguished.

[42] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 392-93.

Hagen uses a variation form to develop the speaker's emotional states. The vocal phrase repeats throughout stanzas with slight changes while the accompaniment varies greatly. The piano part keeps the same harmonic progression. But over the stanzas, the texture becomes richer and richer, and the number of measures of the first four stanzas increases (13, 14, 18, and 20) as the length of waiting time becomes longer.

The first stanza shows Hagen's use of the harmonic language and descriptive vocal phrase. The four-measure prelude sets quite bright and hopeful feelings with major sonority, but it is disturbed immediately by A♭ in m. 3. Like the first song, the prelude is on a dominant area, and when the voice comes in, the music settles the tonality of C major in m. 4. But following F♯ both in the bass and voice in m. 5 interrupts the key area again.

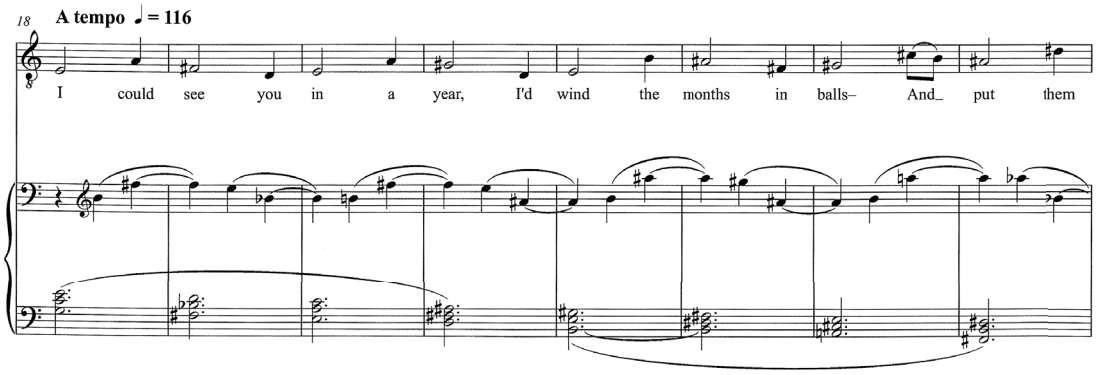
The opening vocal theme describes the speaker's mundane, monotonous life by repeating the long-short rhythm and the up-and-down melodic contour along with the simple chordal accompaniment. Hagen employs augmented chords, B♭+ in m. 6 and D+ in m. 8. These augmented chords do not resolve, as the speaker's waiting continues without resolution.



Example 4.9. Hagen, "If you were coming in the Fall," mm. 1-8.

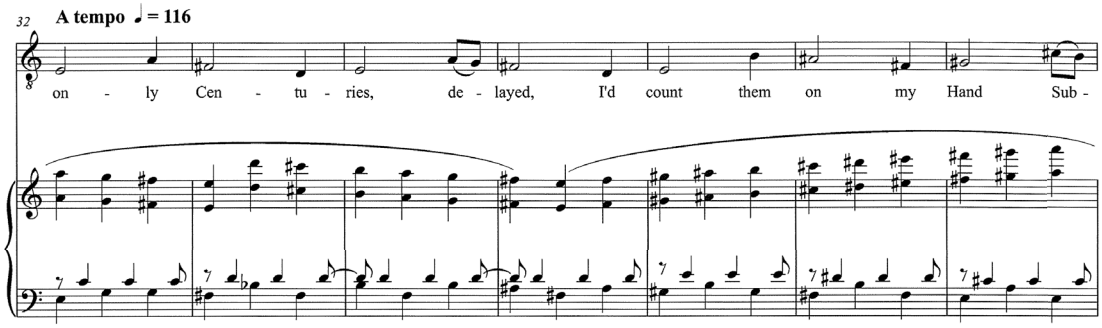
In the second stanza, the chordal accompaniment adds the short-long rhythmic pattern and up-and-down melodic figure in the right hand which interweave with the vocal phrase. The left hand has a richer texture of chords in different inversions that generate an extensive

descending bass while the right hand is gradually ascending. Meanwhile, the voice melody repeats but strikes G♯ on m. 21, when the speaker's conception of waiting time changes from the "season" to a "year."



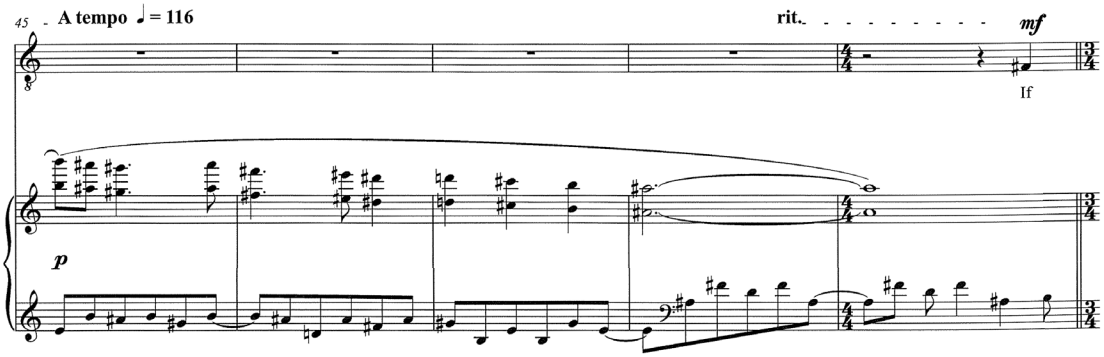
Example 4.10. Hagen, "If you were coming in the Fall," mm. 18-25.

In the third stanza, the accompaniment has more density as the text says an unmanageable span of time, centuries. The left hand breaks up the beats with an eighth-note value, and the right hand plays octaves of ascending and descending scales.



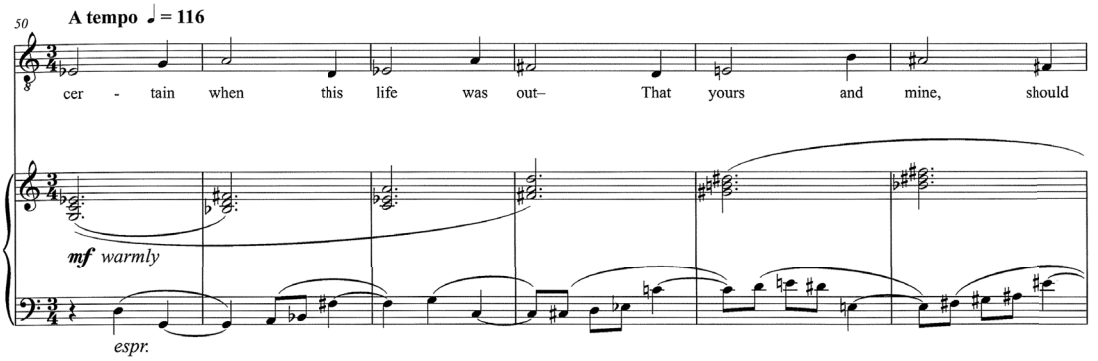
Example 4.11. Hagen, "If you were coming in the Fall," mm. 32-38.

The stanza is in eighteen measures including a little interlude of a thinking moment that the speaker may think 'what if we will meet together after death eventually?' At this moment, the dynamic changes to ***p***, and the music thins out with the descending chromatic line in the right hand.



Example 4.12. Hagen, "If you were coming in the Fall," mm. 45-49.

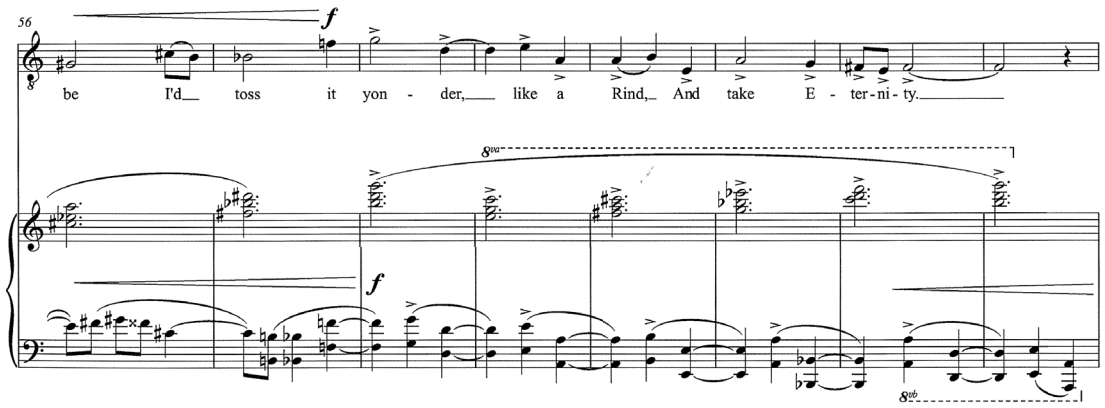
The fourth stanza, when the speaker's thought eventually reaches the afterlife where a spiritual reunion is certainly possible, the mood of the theme changes dramatically. Hagen presents the strong dynamics in this part. It begins with ***mf***, takes crescendo until ***ff*** in m. 64, and decreases and ends with ***p***. In addition, the beginning notes of the vocal melody are different from other stanzas. It is not G-E but F♯-E♭ which gives a sense of dragging down. The bass line in the piano plays a new strong melody. Moreover, the atmosphere alters with the modal change through E♭ and diminished chords with B♭.



Example 4.13. Hagen, "If you were coming in the Fall," mm. 50-55.

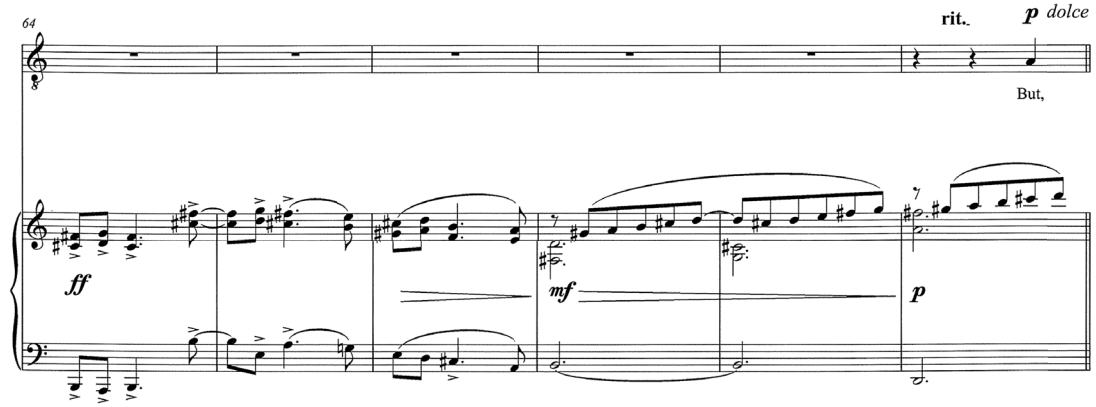
The music highlights the text when it speaks to death and eternity. The vocal line places the highest note on "yonder." Hagen uses the register-play again, and this time the range between the bass and the right hand is extreme from the lowest note the piano can play, A_0, to high G_7. It illustrates the separation of the body and the spirit as the text mentions "Rind," – the mortal life –

and “Eternity” – the spiritual life.



Example 4.14. Hagen, “If you were coming in the Fall,” mm. 56-63

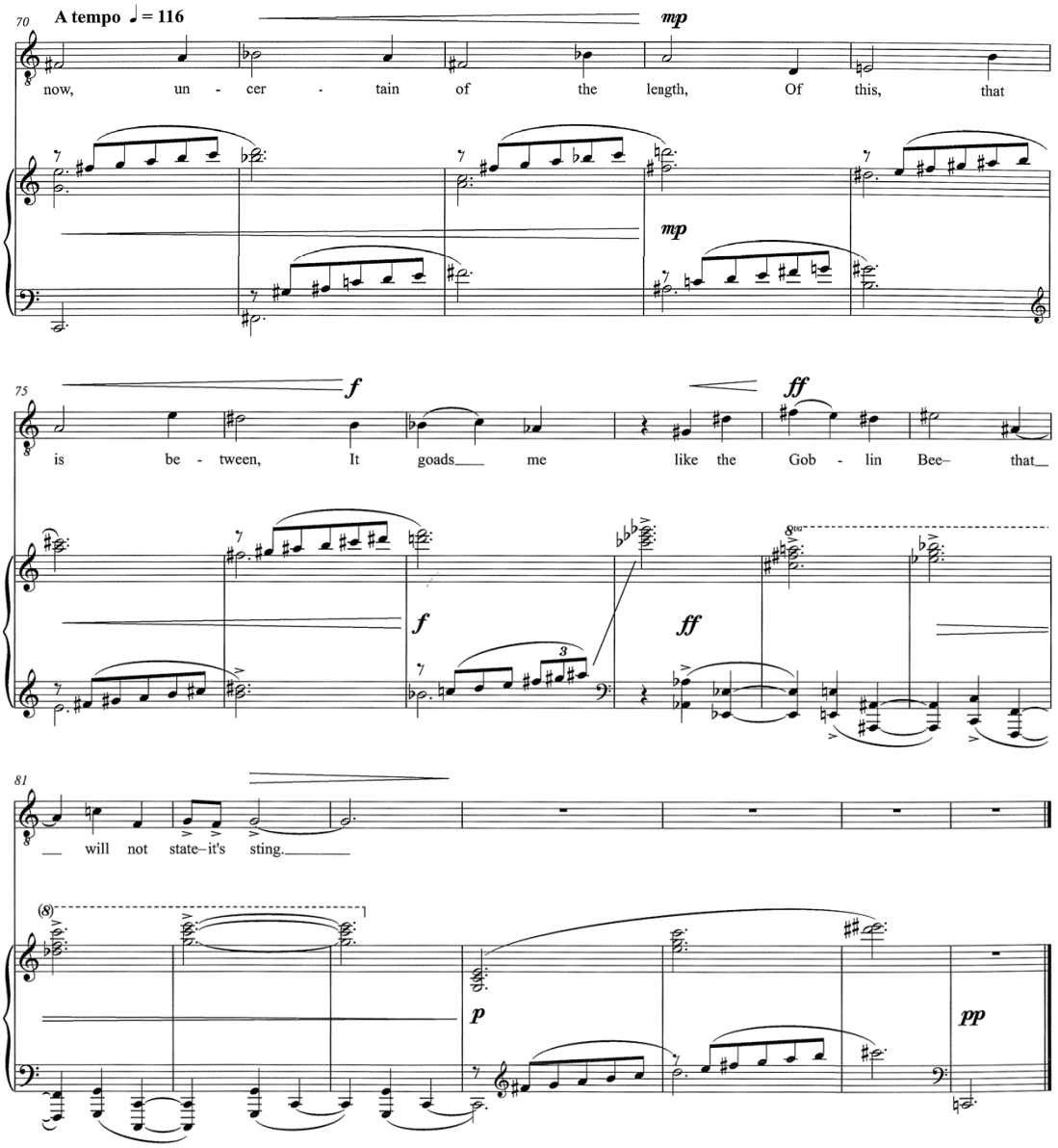
Another interlude follows, and the parallel fourths, the church bell sound seen in “A Dying Eye,” return along with a new material of a series of ascending eighth notes, as the text reaches to the afterlife.



Example 4.15. Hagen, “If you were coming in the Fall,” mm. 64-69.

In the last stanza, the up-and-down contour of the voice part changes to a small arch in mm. 70-71with half step from A to B♭ on “uncertain.” This half step generates a misty feeling of the word. The new animated material of eighth notes introduced in the interlude fills the piano part and gives a sense of moving forward. This figure possibly implies both how time flies and the flight the bee. In the poem, the last stanza is in the speaker’s present time, and uncertainty threatens her dreams like “the Goblin Bee” and “its sting.” Hagen stresses these words, “the

Goblin Bee" and "its sting," by putting ***ff*** and musical accents in mm. 79 and 82. From m. 80, the harmonic progression becomes simple and prepares the strong tonic arrival. On m. 84, the journey of the time finally resolves to the tonic chord, but the bee abruptly interrupts the resolution with its sting – penetrating sound of D♯ and E♯ in the right hand.



Example 4.16. Hagen, "If you were coming in the Fall," mm. 70-87.

4. Wild Nights

Wild nights – Wild nights!
Were I with thee
Wild nights should be
Our luxury!

Futile – the winds –
To a Heart in port –
Done with the Compass –
Done with the Chart!

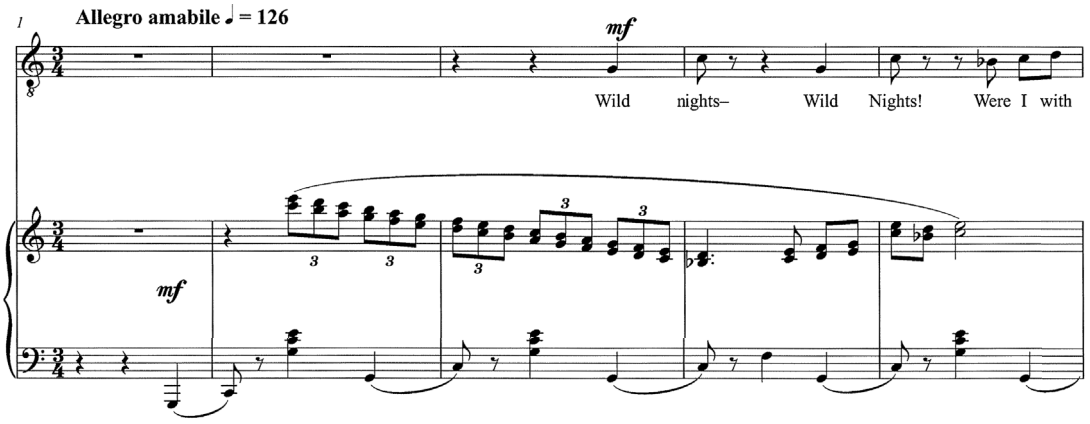
Rowing in Eden –
Ah – the Sea!
Might I but moor – tonight –
In thee!

(J249/ F269)[43]

The poem describes an erotic and passionate scene of a loving couple. When the "heart" is united "in port" either physically or spiritually, "the winds" are no more threats, and there is no need of "the compass" or "chart." The third stanza describes the dramatic scene of the reunion more powerfully. Like other poems, however, the text implies not only the sensual intimacy with a human lover but also the spiritual love toward God. Dickinson puts the biblical word, "Eden," a heavenly place, which suggests a longing for God. In this case, "tonight" can mean the death and afterlife where the speaker can finally meet God. Dickinson again shows the ambiguity and metaphors in this simple-looking text.

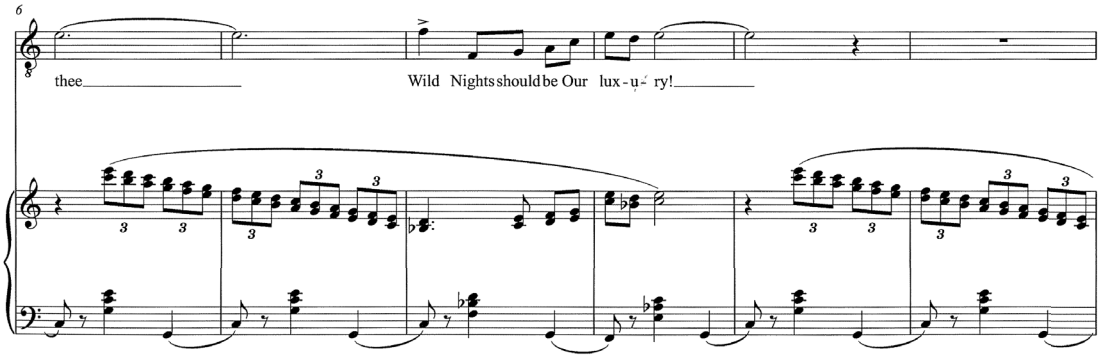
The mood of the song is always bright and passionate no matter whether the text is sensual or religious. Hagen delivers this kind of mood through a fast tempo with animated figures in the piano part. The right hand plays a series of descending and ascending thirds in a triplet rhythm. The triplets deliver not only overflowing passion but also the image of water. The left-hand figure within the 3/4 meter provides the dancing feeling for the entire song. Especially, the accented third beat with a slur in the bass gives a grounded sense and implies the image of "Rowing" and "Might I but moor" with the speaker's confident voice.

[43] Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Johnson, 179-80.



Example 4.17. Hagen, "Wild Nights," mm. 1-5.

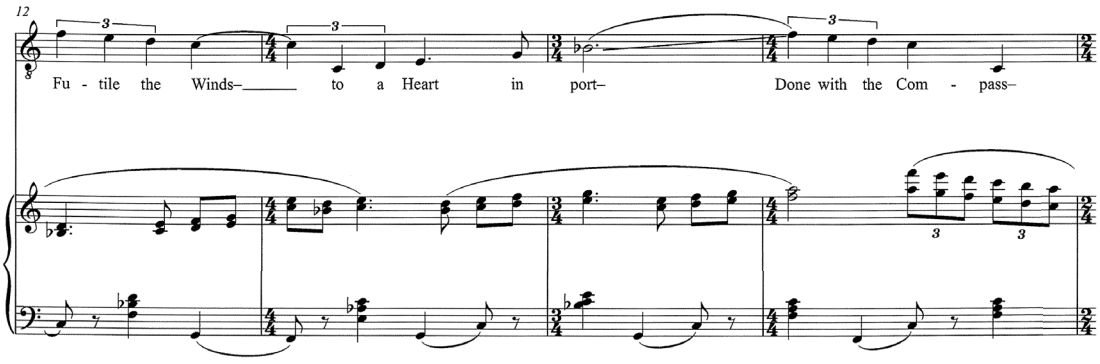
Although the descriptive piano gestures are consistent throughout the whole piece, the vocal part of "Wild Nights" is through-composed unlike other songs in the group. In the first part, the vocal phrase on "Wild nights" carries excitement and confidence by jumping up to a perfect fourth, which is the motive introduced in the left hand of the piano part. The phrase, "Wild nights," is conspicuous again by a high note on F with an accent and by dropping down an octave in m. 8. In addition, the composer enhances a delightful tone of the song by placing the bright vowel [i] of "thee" and "luxury" on the long notes.



Example 4.18. Hagen, "Wild Nights," mm. 6-11.

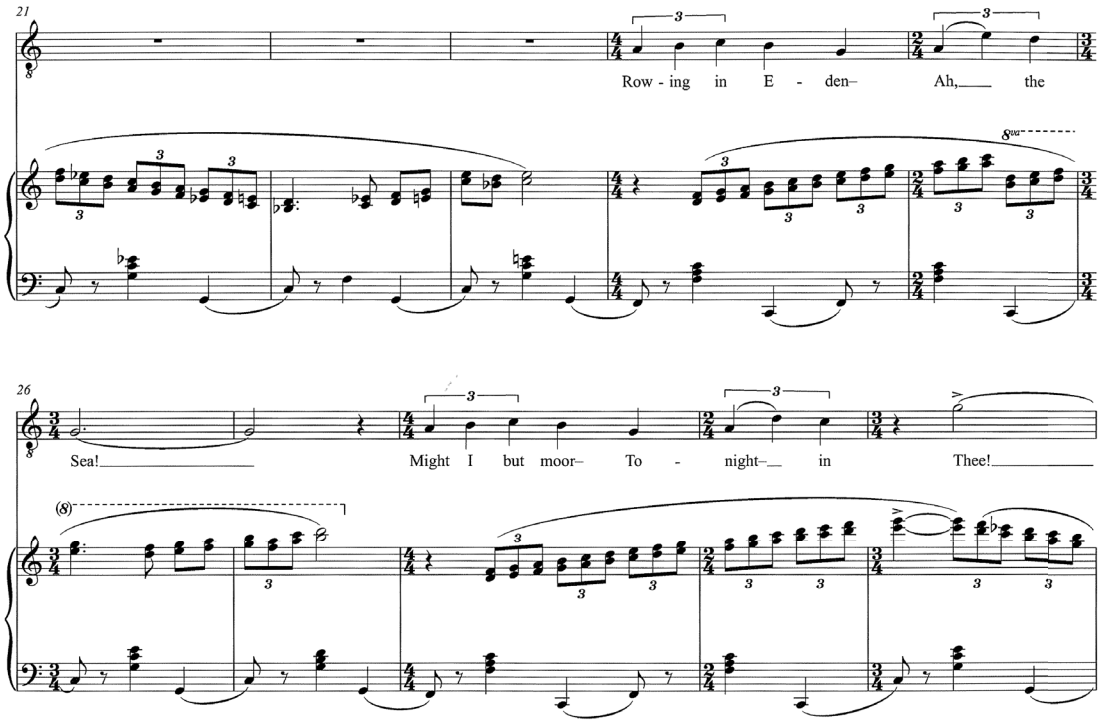
In the second part, the vocal melody changes its figure as the text changes the atmosphere. Once lovers find each other, the winds are futile, and the compass or chart is no longer needed. Along with the meaning of the text, the exciting vocal melody shifts to the stepwise descending figure. The vocal phrase generates fluid and legato feelings with triplet rhythm, glissando, and meter

changes. The glissando especially highlights the core meaning of the stanza. The accompaniment also illustrates a smoother mood although the musical gestures are derived from the previous stanza: The left hand of the piano part keeps its figure while the right hand delivers the musical pattern of thirds shown in mm. 4-5 and 8-9. The open sound of the descending sixths – the inversion of thirds – provides a different sonority in mm. 15-16.



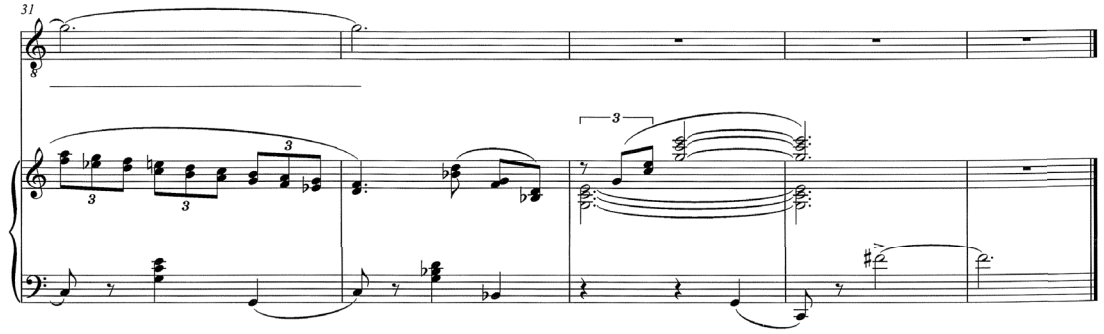
Example 4.19. Hagen, "Wild Nights," mm. 12-15.

In m. 20, the descending thirds return, but now in a minor mode. The minor tone describes the threat of wild wind and wave, obstacles of reunion. However, the thirds become optimistic soon with a major mode in m. 24 when the voice announces the final eternal reunion of the couple. For this exciting moment, the figure of the consecutive thirds in the triplet rhythm changes its direction to ascend through a very extended high register. The ascending motion and high notes increase joyful and enthusiastic feelings. The vocal melody also changes the direction in the final stanza. Unlike its descending and dropping motion of the vocal figure in the second stanza (see Example 4.19), the triplet rhythms in the voice rise and leap upward in mm. 24-25 and 28-29. Furthermore, the bright tone of [i] shown in the first stanza returns on the words, "sea" and "Thee," with long notes. Especially, "Thee" hits the highest note in the song, and the rest beforehand on the downbeat highlights the speaker's final destination. The return of descending thirds in a minor scale in m. 30 gives an ambiguous feeling. But, this time, the minor feeling cracks soon on the second beat in m. 31 by the return of E♮ unlike m. 21.



Example 4.20. Hagen, "Wild Nights," mm. 21-30.

As the word, "tonight," implies death and the eternal afterlife, Hagen uses the wide range in the piano, similarly to other songs in the group. In m. 34, particularly, the figure of the pianist playing the wide range – the high C major triad and low C_2 – visualizes a physical image of embracing arms. It illustrates the couple's everlasting reunion: "Might I but moor Tonight in Thee!"



Example 4.21. Hagen, "Wild Nights," mm. 31-35.

The harmony is quite straightforward, but Hagen hides some ambiguity inside the large stable harmonic progression. The tonic chord settles immediately at the beginning, unlike other

songs. The first stanza stays on the tonic, C major, but with the unpredictable striking tone of B♭. This tone actively appears in mm. 12-14 and prepares the F major realm. The area of IV in mm. 15-16, 24-25, and 28-29 simply leads to the dominant to tonic progression, but the reoccurrence of unexpected tones of B♭ and E♭ provide the listeners with striking, interesting moments. At the very end in mm. 33-35, the C major chord is very firm finally as the pianist provides a picture of embracing. But again, its tritone F♯ interrupts the image of completion instantly. This effect echoes the ending of the first song.

For this simple and exciting text, Hagen offers a joyful and passionate feeling. Even in this simple song, however, he never loses the art of ambiguity and the listeners' interest. He always keeps the lid on the striking and interesting moments under the general simplicity so that he can provide open-ended meaning, as does Emily Dickinson.

CONCLUSION

"When we add music to verse, we see the poet's achievement in a new perspective."[1] Emily Dickinson's poetry includes concise and casual words, but her simple words imply complex images and profound insights that transcend the superficial meaning of the words. All three composers, Lori Laitman, Jake Heggie, and Daron Hagen, vividly interpret Dickinson's poetic imagery and ambiguous meaning. But the mode of expression is different for each composer: Laitman as a text painter, Heggie as a storyteller, and Hagen as a mood setter.

Lori Laitman delicately describes text by highlighting important words and their images. Text painting is one of her prominent compositional techniques. Her word painting is very direct and catches the image of the word straightforwardly. She paints each word one by one, and as a result, her songs often show frequent changes of tonal center, meter, melodic and rhythmic figures, dynamics, tempi, etc. Naturally, her songs are through-composed and sectional. The direction of the musical phrase moves unpredictably but smoothly. Laitman's delicate expression is rather microscopic per word, per verse.

Considering Daron Hagen next, he sets the text in a macroscopic way. Hagen understands Dickinson's ambiguous imagery, and he broadly sets the mood of the text throughout the structure of the song and with his unique harmonic language. Hagen sustains a balance between simple structure and complex harmony that suits Dickinson's simple but insightful expressions. His Dickinson settings are in simple forms according to the structure of the text. The first three songs are simply in ABA', AA', and variation. Even his through-composed song, "Wild Nights," with only a few motives repeating in the voice and piano part is much simpler than Laitman's songs. Within the simple structure of the songs, Hagen creates the mood magically through complex harmonic colors with lots of dissonances, chromatic movements, and modal exchanges. Hagen also employs word painting, but it is not like Laitman's text painting. While Laitman's

[1] Lowenberg, xxv.

text painting visualizes the vivid and rich image of the word more directly, Hagen illustrates the image of the secondary meaning of the poems.

Jake Heggie uses a wide range of compositional styles to tell the story. Heggie sets the mood, theme, nuance, character, and the speaker's emotion to carry a drama embodied in the text. His musical expressions are both microscopic and macroscopic. Like Laitman, Heggie actively employs the text painting and sound effects, and his songs are mostly through-composed. But his music is more formed and less sectionalized than Laitman's, and the repetitive musical motives of the text painting especially in the piano pervade the entire song similarly to Hagen. Heggie also generates a dramatic climax in each song and in the whole cycle. The sequence of contrasting musical ideas creates a flow of the story. As a result, the music represents the composer's own creative perspective and storyline.

Furthermore, each composer approaches text differently. Dickinson's use of dashes and capitalizations are realized most sensitively in Laitman's songs. She indicates almost every dash and capitalized word by placing them on longer notes. Heggie also respectfully acknowledges them in some degree by long notes and by rests. However, Hagen is comparatively less sensitive to dashes and capitalization. Because he repeats the vocal line in the musical form, it is not possible to demonstrate all of Dickinson's punctuation.

Hagen respects, however, the large structure of the text and assigns a proper musical structure. Also, he never repeats a word or a verse in music because he believes, per Ned Rorem, that the poem has its own musicality, which the composer should recognize in the original text and express it. On the other hand, Laitman and Heggie do repeat words. The purpose of Laitman's repetition is to emphasize the core word or verse of the poem. For example, she repeats the verse 'And they will differ – if they do – As Syllable from Sound –' in "Wider Than the Sky," the word 'Experience' in "I Stepped from Plank to Plank," and the entire verses in "In This Short Life." Heggie also repeats keywords like 'Infinity' in "Silence." In many cases, however, his repetition is for effective storytelling. Sometimes, he just repeats the vocal melody without text by humming or scatting as seen in "Silence" and "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" These melodic

repetitions continue the mood of the story as well as the character's emotion. Also, in Heggie's songs, he lets the speaker tells the story through the frequent repetition of words and verses in "Goodnight." Moreover, Heggie inserts new words or sounds to generate theatrical gestures. In "Fame," he adds 'zz,' 'ah!' 'ouch!' and 'sss.' These sound effects allow performers to create dramatic scenes.

These three composers' different compositional techniques and styles result in distinctive musical contributions to American art songs. Like these composers, a number of other composers have carried out Dickinson's poetic imagery diversely through their interpretation of her poetry. With the large volume of her writings and the power of her metaphoric words, I believe Dickinson's poetic imagery will continue to flourish musically and stimulate a wide range of musicians century by century.

Appendix A: Comprehensive List of Emily Dickinson Settings

by Lori Laitman

Days and Nights, for soprano and piano (1995)
Along with Me (Robert Browning)
They Might Not Need Me (Emily Dickinson)
The Night Has a Thousand Eyes (Francis W. Bourdillon)
Over the Fence (Dickinson)
Song (Christina Rosetti)
Wild Nights (Dickinson)

Four Dickinson Songs, for soprano or mezzo-soprano and piano (1996)
Will there really be a Morning?
I'm Nobody
She Died
If I…

Between the Bliss and Me, for soprano and piano (1997)
I Gained it so
The Book
I Could not prove

Two Dickinson Songs, for soprano and piano (2002)
Good Morning Midnight
Wider than the Sky

One Bee and Revery, for high voice and voice (2003)
The Butterfly upon
Hope is a Strange invention
To Make A Prairie

Fresh Patterns, for two sopranos and piano (2003)
It's All I Have to Bring Today (Emily Dickinson)
A Letter for Emily Dickinson (Annie Finch)
Fresh Patterns (Finch and Dickinson)

From *Come to Me in Dreams*, one-act chamber opera (2004)
Wild Nights (originally from *Days and Nights*)

If I…, for chorus (2004)
(originally from *Four Dickinson Songs*)

The Perfected Life, for all voice types and piano (2006)
An Amethyst Remembrance
Dear March
The Perfected Life

In This Short Life, for soprano and piano (2011)
Some Keep The Sabbath
I Stepped From Plank To Plank
In This Short Life

The Earth and I, for SATB a cappella choral cycle (2011)
The Sun Went Down
The Sky is Low
The Wind

'Tis Philosophy, for all voice types and piano (2011)

Appendix B: Comprehensive List of Emily Dickinson Settings by Jake Heggie

She sweeps with many-colored Brooms, for soprano and piano (1987)

All that I do, for soprano and piano (1987)

Faith Disquiet, for SATB chorus a cappella (1987)
"Why do I love" You, Sir?
What if I say I shall not wait!
If you were coming in the fall

I Shall Not Live in Vain, for mezzo-soprano solo, girls chorus (SA), hand bells and piano (1995, rev. 1998)

On the Road to Christmas, for mezzo-soprano and string orchestra (1996)
The Night is Freezing Fast (A. E. Housman)
The Car Ride to Christmas (Frederica von Stade)
Good King Merrily on High (traditional)
I wonder as I wander (John Jacob Niles)
The Road to Bethlehem (Emily Dickinson)
And then the Setting Sun (von Stade)
Christmas Time of Year (Jake Heggie)

Before the Storm, for mezzo-soprano, cello and piano (1998)
Before the Storm (Judyth Walker)
It sounded as if the streets were running (Emily Dickinson)
What lips my lips have kissed (Edna St. Vincent Millay)
The Thin Edge (Dorothy Parker)

The Faces of Love, Song Collections (1999)
I shall not live in vain (1995)
As well as Jesus? (1995)
If you were coming in the Fall (1987)
It makes no difference abroad (1998)
At last, to be identified! (1995)

From Emily's Garden, for soprano, flute, violin, cello and piano (1999)
Here, Where the Daisies Fit My Head (originally written in 1987)
In lands I never saw (originally written in 1987)
To make a prairie
It makes no difference abroad

How Well I Knew the Light, for soprano and piano (2000)
Ample Make This Bed
The Sun Kept Setting

The Starry Night, for mezzo-soprano and piano (2001)
The Starry Night (Anne Sexton)
Celestial Locomotion (Vincent Van Gogh)
Go Thy Great Way (Emily Dickinson)
Reflection (Van Gogh)
The sun kept setting (Dickinson)
Touch (Van Gogh)
I would not paint a picture (Dickinson)

A Great Hope Fell: Songs from Civil War, for baritone and chamber orchestra (2001)
Africa (Maya Angelou)
When Johnny Comes Marching Home (Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore)
Letter to President Lincoln from Annie Davis, 1864
Was My Brother in the Battle? (Stephen Foster)
A Great Hope Fell (Emily Dickinson)
Glory (Julia Ward Howe)
America (Angelou)

Winter Roses, for mezzo-soprano, string quintet, wind quintet and piano (2004)
Prologue: Winter Roses (Charlene Baldridge)
I. Two Birds
The Wren (Baldridge)
The Robin (Emily Dickinson)
II. Three Shades (in memoriam C.v.S.)
A Hero (Frederica von Stade)
Sleeping (Raymond Carver)
To My Dad (von Stade)
III. Looking West
Sweet Light (Carver)
Epilogue: Late Fragement (Carver)

Newer Every Day, for soprano and piano or orchestra (2014)
Silence
I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Fame
That I did always love
Goodnight

These Strangers, for soprano and piano (2018)
These Strangers, in a foreign World (Emily Dickinson)
In the Midst of Thousands (Frederick Douglass)
I did not speak out (Martin Niemöller)
To a Stranger, #52 from Leaves of Grass (Walt Whitman)

Appendix C: Comprehensive List of Emily Dickinson Settings by Daron Hagen

Love in a Life, song cycle for voice and piano (1981-1998)
- Love in a Life (Robert Browning)
- Congedo (Nuar Alsadir)
- Ample Make This Bed (Emily Dickinson)
- Stanzas for Music (Lord Byron)
- The Waking (Theodore Roethke)
- To You – Version 1 (Walt Whitman)
- To You – Version 2 (Walt Whitman)
- Love (Thomas Lodge)

Hope, for SATB and keyboard, or any three single line instruments (1996)

Songs of Experience, for high/low voice and piano (2005)
- Youth, Day, Old Age, and Night (Walt Whitman)
- Amelia's Song (Gardner McFall)
- Wisdom (Sara Teasdale)
- Elegy for Ray Charles (Stephen Dunn)
- The Stranger's Grave (Emily Lawless)
- Two Butterflies (Emily Dickinson)

Four Dickinson Songs, for voice and piano (2014)
- Of All the Souls
- A Dying Eye
- If You Were Coming
- Wild Nights

Bibliography

Bempéchat, Paul André. “Laitman, Lori.” *Grove Music Online.* Edited by Deane Root. Accessed November 28, 2018. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

Berg, Gregory. “Lori Laitman: The scarlet letter.” *Journal of Singing, 74.* no. 5 (May/June 2018): 596-597.

——. “Within These Spaces: Songs of Lori Laitman.” *Journal of Singing, 66,* no. 3 (January/February 2010): 369-371.

Blumenthal, Ralph. “For an Operatic Life, Check Out the Composer’s.” *New York Times*, March 13, 2008, Thursday.

Boziwick, George, Katherine Preston, and Mark Katz. ““My Business is to Sing”: Emily Dickinson’s Musical Borrowings.” *Journal of the Society for American Music, 8*, no. 2 (May 2014): 130-166.

Carl, Robert. “Heggie: A Lucky Child. Some Times of the Day. Facing Forward/Looking Back. Here and Gone. To say before going to Sleep. Songs and Sonnets to Ophelia. Final Monologue.” *Fanfare: The Magazine for Serious Record Collectors*, *34,* no. 3 (January 2011): 308-309.

Carman, Judith. “Heggie, Jake (b. 1961). “The Faces of Love. The Songs of Jake Heggie”. “*Journal of Singing, 59*, no. 2 (November 2002): 181-182.

Chute, James. “Hagen, Daron Aric.” *Grove Music Online*. Edited by Deane Root. Accessed October 25, 2018. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

Cooley, Carolyn Lindley. *The Music of Emily Dickinson's Poems and Letters: A Study of Imagery and Form.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003.

Crawford, Mary E. “Dickinson Sings: A Study of a Selection of Lori Laitman’s Settings for High Voice.” D.M.A. diss., University of Cincinnati, 2013. Accessed December 1, 2018. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

Dickinson, Emily. *Emily Dickinson's Poems: As She Preserved Them*. Edited by Cristanne Miller. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016.

——. *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*. Edited by Thomas H. Johnson and Theodora Ward. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1958.

——. *The Poems of Emily Dickinson.* Edited by Ralph W. Franklin. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999.

——. *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Including Variant Readings Critically Compared with All Known Manuscripts.* Edited by Thomas H. Johnson. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1955.

Eberwein, Jane Donahue. “Dickinson, Emily.” In *American National Biography*. Accessed December 12, 2018. http://www.anb.org.

Eisenberg, Susan Dormady. “From Art Song to Opera.” *Classical Singer*, October 1, 2009. Accessed November 14, 2018. https://www.csmusic.net/content/articles/from-art-song to-opera.

Farr, Judith, and Louise Carter. *The Gardens of Emily Dickinson.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Fiertek, Michelle Marie. “A Performance Guide to “Eve-Song” by Jake Heggie.” D.M.A. diss., University of Hartford, 2013. Accessed October 30, 2018. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

Grabher, Gudrun, Roland Hagenbüchle, and Cristanne Miller. *The Emily Dickinson Handbook.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998.

Hagen, Daron. Daron Aric Hagen: Official Site. Accessed December 21, 2018. https://www.daronhagen.com.

——. *Four Dickinson Songs: For Voice and Piano*. New York: Burning Sled Music, 2014.

——. “Where Do You Get Your Ideas?” *Huffington Post*, July 2, 2012, Monday.

Heggie, Jake. *Newer Every Day: For Soprano and Piano.* San Francisco: Bent Pen Music, Inc., 2014.

——. The Official Website of Jake Heggie, Composer & Pianist. Accessed November 25, 2018. https://jakeheggie.com.

Johnson, Thomas H. *Emily Dickinson: An Interpretive Biography.* Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960.

Kavaler-Adler, Susan. “Emily Dickinson and the Subject of Seclusion.” *American Journal of Psychoanalysis, 51*. no. 1 (March 1991): 21-38.

Keenan, Alanna. “A Performer’s Guide to Jake Heggie’s The Deepest Desire: Four Meditations on Love.” D.M.A. diss., Louisiana State University, 2009. Accessed December 2, 2018. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

Kimball, Carol. “Setting Emily.” *Journal of Singing, 68*, no. 4 (April/May 2012): 461-464.

——. *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*. Rev. ed. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2006.

Kirzinger, Robert. “Hagen: Night, Again.” *Fanfare: The Magazine for Serious Record Collectors*, *23,* no. 1 (September 1999): 246-247.

Kreider, Paul Kevin. “The Art Songs of Daron Hagen: Lyrical Dramaticism and Simplicity with an Interpretive Guide to Rittenhouse Songs and Resuming Green.” D.M.A. diss., University of Arizona, 1999. Accessed December 5, 2018. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

Lines, Carol. “The Songs of Lori Laitman.” *Journal of Singing* 64, no. 1 (September/October 2007): 31-46.

Laitman, Lori. *In This Short Life: Three Emily Dickinson Settings: For Soprano and Piano*. United States: Enchanted Knickers Music, 2010.

——. Lori Laitman, Composer. Accessed November 18, 2018. http://artsongs.com.

——. *Two Dickinson Songs: For Soprano and Piano*. United States: Enchanted Knickers Music, 2004.

Littlejohn, David. "A West Coaster With a Global Reputation." *Wall Street Journal*, March 2, 2015, Monday.

Lowenberg, Carlton. *Musicians Wrestle Everywhere: Emily Dickinson & Music.* Berkeley, CA: Fallen Leaf Press, 1992.

Lundin, Roger. *Emily Dickinson and the Art of Belief.* 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004.

Mermelstein, David. "He's Got a Song in His Art." *Los Angeles Times*, November 10, 1996, Sunday.

Platt, Russell. "Artful simplicity: The Songs of Daron Hagen." *Journal of Singing, 55*, no. 1 (September 1998): 3-11.

Porter, David T. *The Art of Emily Dickinson's Early Poetry.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966.

Redding, Jane McCalla. "An Introduction to American Song Composer Daron Aric Hagen (b. 1961) and His Miniature Folk Opera: Dear Youth." D.M.A. diss., Louisiana State University, 2002. Accessed December 4, 2018. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

Redman, Carolyn E. "Songs to the Moon": A Song Cycle by Jake Heggie from Poems by Vachel Lindsay." D.M.A. diss., Ohio State University, 2004. Accessed November 26, 2018. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

Reel, James. "A Conversation with Composer Daron Hagen." *Fanfare: The Magazine for Serious Record Collectors*, *23,* no. 1 (September 1999): 129-133.

Rhein, John Von. "A diva in the twilight of her career inspires new song cycle, at Ravinia." Chicago Tribune, August 5, 2014, Tuesday.

Rorem, Ned. "Learning with Daron." *Opera News*, April 1993, 29 and 48.

Savage, Tom. "High Scorers: Jake Heggie." *Opera News*, January 2000, 10-13.

Sewall, Richard B. *The Life of Emily Dickinson.* Vols. 1 and 2. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974.

Sigman, Matthew. "Composing a Life." *Opera News*, July 2015, 24-29.

Small, Judy Jo. "A Musical Aesthetic." In *Emily Dickinson: A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by Judith Farr, 206-224. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996.

SUNY Potsdam. “The 2018 Domenic J. Pellicciotti Opera Composition Prize.” The State University of New York at Potsdam. Accessed December 2, 2018. http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/Crane/events/pellicciotti.

Trustees of Amherst College. The Emily Dickinson Museum. Accessed December 12, 2018. https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org.

Unger, Shannon Melody. “The Starry Night: Jake Heggie, Vincent Van Gogh, and the Consolation of the Stars.” D.M.A. diss., The University of Memphis, 2011. Accessed December 3, 2018. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

Wallace, Robert K. “The Deepest Dickinson.” *Dickinson and Moby-Dick in 2015* (blog). November 23, 2014. Accessed April 24, 2018. https://dickinsonandmobydick.wordpress.com/2014/11/23/the-deepest-dickinson.

Wylie, David F. “Jake Heggie: A Singer’s Composer.” *Classical Singer*, January 1, 2011. Accessed on November 23, 2018. https://www.csmusic.net/content/articles/jake-heggie.